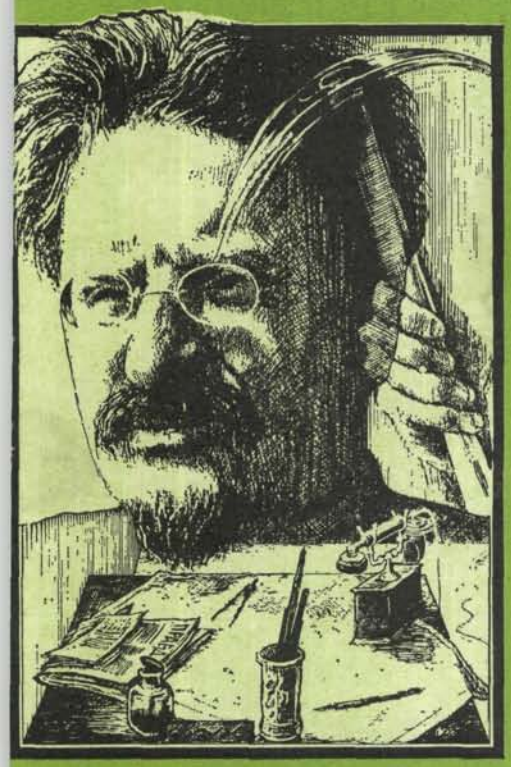
Encounter

May 1972 35p



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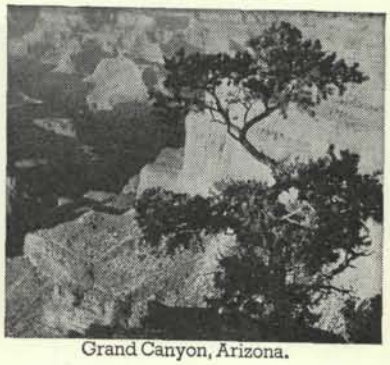

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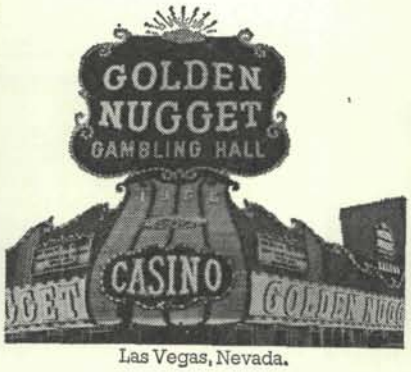

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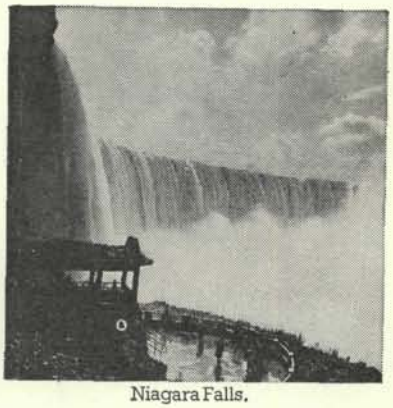

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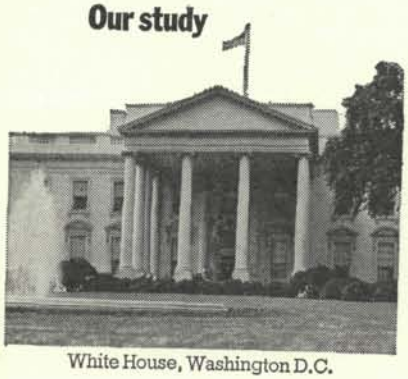

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William Trevor

Going Home

"MULLIGATAWNY SOUP," Carruthers said in the dining-car. "Roast beef, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, mixed vegetables."

"And madam?" murmured the waiter.

Miss Fanshawe said she'd have the same. The waiter thanked her. Carruthers said: "Miss Fanshawe'll take a medium dry sherry. Pale ale for me, please."

The waiter paused. He glanced at Miss Fanshawe, shaping his lips.

"I'm sixteen and a half," Carruthers said. "Oh, and a bottle of Beaune, 1962."

It was the highlight of every term and every holiday for Carruthers, coming like a no man's land between the two: the journey with Miss Fanshawe, to their different homes. Not once had she officially complained, either to his mother or to the school. She wouldn't do that; it wasn't in Miss Fanshawe to complain officially. And as for him, he couldn't help himself.

"Always Beaune on a train," he said now, "because of all the burgundies it travels happiest."

"Thank you, sir," the waiter said.

"Thank *you*, old chap."

The waiter went, moving swiftly in the empty dining-car. The train slowed and then gathered speed again. The fields it passed through were bright with sunshine; the water of a stream glittered in the distance.

"You shouldn't lie about your age," Miss Fanshawe reproved, smiling to show she hadn't been upset by the lie. But lies like that, she explained, could get a waiter into trouble.

Carruthers, a sharp-faced boy of thirteen, laughed a familiar harsh laugh. He said he didn't like the waiter, a remark that Miss Fanshawe ignored.

"What weather!" she remarked instead. "Just look at those weeping willows!" She hadn't ever noticed them before, she added, but Carruthers contradicted that, reminding her that she had often before remarked on these weeping willows. She smiled, with false vagueness in her face, slightly shaking her head. "Perhaps it's just that everything looks so different this lovely summer. What will you do, Carruthers? Your mother took you to Greece last year, didn't she? It's almost a shame to leave England, I always think, when the weather's like this. So green in the long warm days—"

"Miss Fanshawe, why are you pretending nothing has happened?"

"Happened? My dear, what has happened?"

Carruthers laughed again, and looked through the window at cows resting in the shade of an oak tree. He said, still watching the cows, craning his neck to keep them in his view:

"Your mind is thinking about what has happened and all the time you're attempting to make ridiculous conversation about the long warm days. Your heart is beating fast, Miss Fanshawe; your hands are trembling. There are two little dabs of red high up on your cheeks, just beneath your spectacles. There's a pink flush all over your neck. If you were alone, Miss Fanshawe, you'd be crying your heart out."

MISS FANSHAWE, who was thirty-eight, fair-haired and untouched by beauty, said that she hadn't the foggiest idea what Carruthers was talking about. He shook his head, implying that she lied. He said:

"Why are we being served by a man whom

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neither of us likes when we should be served by someone else? Just look at those weeping willows, you say."

"Don't be silly, Carruthers."

"What has become, Miss Fanshawe, of the other waiter?"

"Now Carruthers, please don't start any nonsense. I'm tired and—"

"It was he who gave me a taste for pale ale, d'you remember that? In your company, Miss Fanshawe, on this train. It was he who told us that Beaune travels best. Have a cig, Miss Fanshawe?"

"No, and I wish you wouldn't either."

"Actually Mrs Carruthers allows me the odd smoke these days. Ever since my thirteenth birthday, May 24th. How can she stop me, she says, when day and night she's at it like a factory chimney herself?"

"Your birthday's May 24th? I never knew. Mine's two days later." She spoke hastily, and with an eagerness that was as false as the vague expression her face had borne a moment ago.

"Gemini, Miss Fanshawe."

"Yes: Gemini. Queen Victoria—"

"The sign of passion. Here comes the interloper."

The waiter placed sherry before Miss Fanshawe and beer in front of Carruthers. He murmured deferentially, inclining his head.

"We've just been saying," Carruthers remarked, "that you're a new one on this line."

"Newish, sir. A month—no, tell a lie—three weeks yesterday."

"We knew your predecessor."

"Oh yes, sir?"

"He used to say this line was as dead as a doornail. Actually, he enjoyed not having anything to do. Remember, Miss Fanshawe?"

Miss Fanshawe shook her head. She sipped her sherry, hoping the waiter would have the sense to go away. Carruthers said:

"In all the time Miss Fanshawe and I have been travelling together there hasn't been a solitary soul besides ourselves in this dining-car."

The waiter said it hardly surprised him. You didn't get many, he agreed, and added, *smoothing the table-cloth, that it would just* be a minute before the soup was ready.

"Your predecessor," Carruthers said, "was a most extraordinary man."

"Oh yes, sir?"

"He had the gift of tongues. He was covered in freckles."

"I see, sir."

"Miss Fanshawe here had a passion for him."

The waiter laughed. He lingered for a moment and then, since Carruthers was silent, went away.

"Now look here, Carruthers," Miss Fanshawe began.

"Don't you think Mrs Carruthers is the most vulgar woman you've ever met?"

"I wasn't thinking of your mother. I will not have you, Carruthers, talking like this to the waiter. Please now."

"She wears a scent called 'In Love'. By Norman Hartnell. A woman of fifty, as thin as fuse wire. My God!"

"Your mother—"

"My mother doesn't concern you—oh, I agree, Miss Fanshawe. Still you don't want to deliver me to the female smelling of drink and tobacco smoke. I always brush my teeth in the lavatory, you know. For your sake, Miss Fanshawe."

"Please don't engage the waiter in conversation. And please don't tell lies about the waiter who was here before. It's ridiculous the way you go on—"

"You're tired, Miss Fanshawe."

"I'm always tired at the end of term."

"That waiter used to say—"

"Oh, for heaven's sake, stop about that waiter!"

"Sorry, Miss Fanshawe. I'm sorry." He seemed to mean it, but she knew he didn't. And even when he spoke again, when his voice was softer, she knew that he was still pretending. "What shall we talk about?" he asked, and with a weary cheerfulness she reminded him that she'd wondered what he was going to do in the holidays. He didn't reply. His head was bent. She knew that he was smiling.

"I'LL WALK beside her," he said. "In Rimini and Venice. In Zurich maybe. By Lake Lugano. Or the Black Sea. New faces will greet her in an American Bar in Copenhagen. Or near the Spanish Steps—in Babbington's English Tea-Rooms. Or in Bandol or Cassis, the Ritz, the Hotel Excelsior in old Madrid. What shall we talk

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about, Miss Fanshawe?"

"You could tell me more. Last year in Greece—"

"I remember once we talked about guinea-pigs. I told you how I killed a guinea-pig that Mrs Carruthers gave me. Another time we talked about Rider Minor. D'you remember that?"

"Yes, but let's not—"

"McGullam was unpleasant to Rider Minor in the Changing Rooms. McGullam and Travers went after Rider Minor with a little piece of wood."

"You told me, Carruthers."

He laughed.

"When I first arrived at Ashleigh Court the only person who spoke to me was Rider Minor. And of course the Sergeant Major. The Sergeant Major told me never to take to cigs. He described the lungs of a friend of his."

"He was quite right."

"Yes, he was. Cigs can give you a nasty disease."

"I wish you wouldn't smoke, Carruthers."

"I like your hat."

"Soup, madam," the waiter murmured. "Sir."

"Don't you like Miss Fanshawe's hat?" Carruthers smiled, pointing at Miss Fanshawe, and when the waiter said that the hat was very nice Carruthers asked him his name. Miss Fanshawe dipped a spoon into her soup. The waiter offered her a roll. His name, he said, was Atkins.

"Are you wondering about us, Mr Atkins?"

"Sir?"

"Everyone has a natural curiosity, you know."

"I see a lot of people in my work, sir."

"Miss Fanshawe's an undermatron at Ashleigh Court Preparatory School for Boys. They use her disgracefully at the end of term—patching up clothes so that the mothers won't complain, packing trunks, sorting out laundry. From dawn till midnight Miss Fanshawe's on the trot. That's why she's tired."

Miss Fanshawe laughed. "Take no notice of him," she said. She broke her roll and buttered a piece of it. She pointed at wheat ripening in a field. The harvest would be good this year, she said.

"At the end of each term," Carruthers went on, "she has to sit with me on this train because we travel in the same direction. I'm out of her authority really, since the term is over. Still, she has to keep an eye."

The waiter, busy with the wine, said he understood. He raised his eyebrows at Miss Fanshawe and winked, but she did not encourage this, pretending not to notice it.

"Imagine, Mr Atkins," Carruthers said, "a country house in the mock Tudor style, with bits built on to it: a rackety old gym and an art room, and changing rooms that smell of perspiration. There are a hundred and three boys at Ashleigh Court, in narrow iron beds with blue rugs on them, which Miss Fanshawe has to see are all kept tidy. She does other things as well: she wears a white overall, and gives out medicines. She pours out cocoa in the dining-hall and at eleven o'clock every morning she hands each boy four *petit beurre* biscuits. She isn't allowed to say Grace. It has to be a master who says Grace, 'For what we're about to receive. . . .' Or the Reverend T. L. Edwards, who owns and runs the place. T.L.E., known to generations as a pervert. He pays boys, actually."

The waiter, having meticulously removed a covering of red foil from the top of the wine bottle, wiped the cork with a napkin before attempting to draw it. He glanced quickly at Miss Fanshawe to see if he could catch her eye in order to put her at her ease with an understanding gesture, but she appeared to be wholly engaged with her soup.

"The Reverend Edwards is a law unto himself," Carruthers said. "Your predecessor was intrigued by him."

"Please take no notice of him." She tried to sound bracing, looking up suddenly and smiling at the waiter.

"The Headmaster accompanied you on the train, did he, sir?"

"No, no, no, no. The Reverend Edwards was never on this train in his life. No, it was simply that your predecessor was interested in life at Ashleigh Court. He would stand there happily listening while we told him the details: you could say he was fascinated."

At this Miss Fanshawe made a noise that was somewhere between a laugh and a denial.

"You could pour the Beaune now, Mr Atkins," Carruthers suggested.

The waiter did so, pausing for a moment, in doubt as to which of the two he should offer a little of the wine to taste. Carruthers nodded to him, indicating that it should be he.

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The waiter complied, and when Carruthers had given his approval he filled both their glasses and lifted from before them their empty soup-plates.

"I've asked you not to behave like that," she said when the waiter had gone.

"Like what, Miss Fanshawe?"

"You know, Carruthers."

"The waiter and I were having a general conversation. As before, Miss Fanshawe, with the other waiter. Don't you remember? Don't you remember my telling him how I took forty of Hornsby's Football Cards? And drank the communion wine in the Reverend's cupboard?"

"I don't believe—"

"And I'll tell you another thing. I excused myself into Rider Minor's gumboots."

"Please leave the waiter alone. Please let's have no scenes this time, Carruthers."

"There weren't scenes with the other waiter. He enjoyed everything we said to him. You could see him quite clearly trying to visualise Ashleigh Court. And Mrs Carruthers in her awful clothes."

"He visualised nothing of the sort. You gave him drink that I had to pay for. He was obliged to listen to your fantasies."

"He enjoyed our conversation, Miss Fanshawe. Why is it that people like you and I are so unpopular?"

SHE DIDN'T ANSWER, but sighed instead. He would go on and on, she knew: there was nothing she could do. She always meant not to protest, but when it came to the point she found it hard to sit silent, mile after mile.

"You know what I mean, Miss Fanshawe? At Ashleigh Court they say you have an awkward way of walking. And I've got no charm: I think that's why they don't much like me. But how for God's sake could any child of Mrs Carruthers have charm?"

"Please don't speak of your mother like that—"

"And yet men fancy her. Awful men arrive at weekends, as keen for sex as the Reverend Edwards is. 'Your mother's a most elegant woman,' a hard-eyed lecher remarked to me last summer, in the Palm Court of a Greek hotel."

"Don't drink too much of that wine. The last time—"

"'You're staggering,' she said the last time. I told her I had 'flu. She's beautiful, I dare say, in her thin way. D'you think she's beautiful?"

"Yes, she is."

"She has men all over the place. Love flows like honey while you make do with waiters on a train."

"Oh, don't be so *silly,* Carruthers."

"She snaps her fingers and people come to comfort her with lust. A woman like that's never alone. While you—"

"Will you please stop talking about me?"

"You have a heart in your breast like anyone else, Miss Fanshawe."

THE WAITER, arriving again, coughed. He leaned across the table and placed a warmed plate in front of Miss Fanshawe and a similar one in front of Carruthers. There was silence while he offered Miss Fanshawe a silver-plated platter with slices of roast beef on it, and square pieces of Yorkshire pudding. In the silence she selected what she wanted, a small portion, for her appetite on journeys with Carruthers was never great. Carruthers took the rest. The waiter offered vegetables.

"Miss Fanshawe ironed that blouse at a quarter to five this morning," Carruthers said. "She'd have ironed it last night if she hadn't been so tired."

"A taste more carrots, sir?"

"I don't like carrots, Mr Atkins."

"Peas, sir?"

"Thank you. She got up from her small bed, Mr Atkins, and her feet were chilly on the linoleum. She shivered, Mr Atkins, as she slipped her nightdress off. She stood there naked, thinking of another person. What became of your predecessor?"

"I don't know, sir. I never knew the man at all. All right for you, madam?"

"Yes, thank you."

"He used to go back to the kitchen, Mr Atkins, and tell the cook that the couple from Ashleigh Court were on the train again. He'd lean against the sink while the cook poked about among his pieces of meat, trying to find us something to eat. Your predecessor would suck at the butt of a cig and occasionally he'd lift a can of beer to his lips. When the cook asked him what the matter was he'd say it was fascinating, a place like Ashleigh Court with boys running about in grey uniforms and an undermatron watching her life go by."

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"Excuse me, sir."

The waiter went. Carruthers said:

" 'She makes her own clothes,' the other waiter told the cook. 'She couldn't give a dinner party the way the young lad's mother could. She couldn't chat to this person and that, moving about among décolleté women and outshining every one of them. Why is she an undermatron at Ashleigh Court Preparatory School for Boys, owned and run by the Reverend T. L. Edwards, known to generations as a pervert?' "

Miss Fanshawe, with an effort, laughed. "Because she's qualified for nothing else," she lightly said.

"I think that freckled waiter was sacked because he interfered with the passengers. 'Vegetables?' he suggested, and before he could help himself he put the dish of cauliflower on the table and put his arms around a woman. 'All tickets please,' cried the ticket-collector and then he saw the waiter and the woman on the floor. You can't run a Railway Company like that."

"Carruthers—"

"Was it something like that, Miss Fanshawe? D'you think?"

"Of course it wasn't."

"Why not?"

"Because you've just made it up. The man was a perfectly ordinary waiter on this train."

"That's not true."

"Of course it is."

"I love this train, Miss Fanshawe."

"It's a perfectly ordinary—"

"Of course it isn't."

Carruthers laughed gaily, waiting for the waiter to come again, eating in silence until it was time for their plates to be cleared away.

"Trifle, madam?" the waiter said. "Cheese and biscuits?"

"Just coffee, please."

"Sit down, why don't you, Mr Atkins? Join us for a while."

"Ah no, sir, no."

"Miss Fanshawe and I don't have to keep up appearances on your train. D'you understand that? We've been keeping up appearances for three long months at Ashleigh Court, and it's time we stopped. Shall I tell you about my mother, Mr Atkins?"

"Your mother, sir?"

"Carruthers—"

"In 1960, when I was three, my father left her for another woman: she found it hard to bear. She had a lover at the time, a Mr Tennyson, but even so she found it hard to forgive my father for taking himself off."

"I see, sir."

"It was my father's intention that I should accompany him to his new life with the other woman, but when it came to the point the other woman decided against that. Why should she be burdened with my mother's child? she wanted to know: you can see her argument, Mr Atkins."

"I must be getting on now, sir."

"So my father arranged to pay my mother an annual sum, in return for which she agreed to give me house room. I go with her when she goes on holiday to a smart resort. My father's a thing of the past. What d'you think of all that, Mr Atkins? Can you visualise Mrs Carruthers at a resort? She's not at all like Miss Fanshawe."

"I'm sure she's not—"

"Not at all."

"Please let go my sleeve, sir."

"We want you to sit down."

"It's not my place, sir, to sit down with the passengers in the dining-car."

"We want to ask you if you think it's fair that Mrs Carruthers should round up all the men she wants while Miss Fanshawe has only the furtive memory of a waiter on a train, a man who came to a sticky end, God knows."

"Stop it!" cried Miss Fanshawe. "Stop it! Stop it! Let go his jacket and let him go away—"

"I have things to do, sir."

"He smelt of fried eggs, a smell that still comes back to her at night."

"You're damaging my jacket. I must ask you to release me at once."

"Are you married, Mr Atkins?"

"Will you please let me go!"

"Carruthers!" Her face was crimson and her neck blotched with a flushing that Carruthers had seen before. "Carruthers, for heaven's sake behave yourself!"

"The Reverend Edwards isn't married, as you might guess, Mr Atkins."

The waiter tried to pull his sleeve out of Carruthers' grasp, panting a little from embarrassment and from the effort. "Let go my jacket!" he shouted. "Will you let me go!"

Carruthers laughed, but did not release his grasp. There was a sound of ripping as the

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jacket tore.

"Miss Fanshawe'll stitch it for you," Carruthers said at once, and added more sharply when the waiter raised a hand to strike him: "Don't do that, please. Don't threaten a passenger, Mr Atkins."

"You've ruined this jacket. You bloody little—"

"Don't use language in front of the lady." He spoke quietly, and to a stranger entering the dining-car at that moment it might have seemed that the waiter was in the wrong, that the torn sleeve of his jacket was the just result of some attempted insolence on his part.

"You're mad," the waiter shouted at Carruthers, his face red and sweating in his anger. "That child's a raving lunatic," he shouted as noisily at Miss Fanshawe.

Carruthers was humming a hymn, "Lord, dismiss us," he softly sang, "with Thy blessing."

"Put any expenses on my bill," whispered Miss Fanshawe. "I'm very sorry."

"Ashleigh Court'll pay," Carruthers said, not smiling now, his face all of a sudden as sombre as the faces of the other two.

No one spoke again in the dining-car. The waiter brought coffee, and later presented a bill.

THE TRAIN STOPPED at a small station. Three people got out as Miss Fanshawe and Carruthers moved down the corridor to their compartment. They walked in silence, Miss Fanshawe in front of Carruthers, he drawing his right hand along the glass of the windows. There'd been an elderly man in their compartment when they'd left it: to Miss Fanshawe's relief he was no longer there. Carruthers slid the door across. She found her book and opened it at once.

"I'm sorry," he said when she'd read a page.

She turned the page, not looking up, not speaking.

"I'm sorry I tormented you," he said after another pause.

She still did not look up, but spoke while moving her eyes along a line of print. "You're always sorry," she said.

Her face and neck were still hot. Her fingers tightly held the paper-backed volume she read. She felt taut and rigid, as though the unpleasantness in the dining-car had coiled some part of her up. On other journeys she'd experienced a similar feeling, though never as unnervingly as she experienced it now. He had never before torn a waiter's clothing.

"Miss Fanshawe?"

"I want to read."

"I'm not going back to Ashleigh Court."

She went on reading and then, when he'd repeated the statement, she slowly raised her head. She looked at him, and thought, as she always did when she looked at him, that he was in need of care. There was a barrenness in his sharp face; his eyes reflected the tang of a bitter truth.

"I took the Reverend Edwards' cigarette-lighter. He's told me he won't have me back."

"That isn't true, Carruthers—"

"At half past eleven yesterday morning I walked into the Reverend's study and lifted it from his desk. Unfortunately he met me on the way out. Ashleigh Court, he said, was no place for a thief."

"But why? Why did you do such a silly thing?"

"I don't know. I don't know why I do a lot of things. I don't know why I pretended you were in love with a waiter. This is the last horrid journey for you, Miss Fanshawe."

"So you won't be coming back—"

"The first time I met you I was crying in a dormitory. D'you remember that? Do you, Miss Fanshawe?"

"Yes, I remember."

"'Are you missing your mummy?' you asked me, and I said no. I was crying because I'd thought I'd like Ashleigh Court. I'd thought it would be heaven, a place without Mrs Carruthers. I didn't say that; not then."

"No."

"You brought me to your room and gave me liquorice allsorts. You made me blow my nose. You told me not to cry because the other boys would laugh at me. And yet I went on crying."

IN THE FIELDS men were making hay. Children in one field waved at the passing train. The last horrid journey, she thought; she would never see the sharp face again, nor the bitterness reflected in the eyes. He'd wept,

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as others occasionally had too; she'd been, for a moment, a mother to him. His own mother didn't like him, he'd later said—on a journey—because his features reminded her of his father's features.

"I don't know why I'm so unpleasant, Miss Fanshawe. The Reverend stared at me last night and said he had a feeling in his bones that I'd end up badly. He said I was a useless sort of person, a boy he couldn't ever rely on. I'd let him down, he said, thieving and lying like a common criminal. 'I'm chalking you up as a failure for Ashleigh,' he said. 'I never had much faith in you, Carruthers.' "

"He's a most revolting man." She said it without meaning to, and yet the words came easily from her. She said it because it didn't matter any more, because he wasn't going to return to Ashleigh Court to repeat her words.

"You were kind to me that first day," Carruthers said. "I liked that holy picture in your room. You told me to look at it, I remember. Your white overall made a noise when you walked."

She wanted to say that once she had told lies too, that at St Monica's School for Girls she'd said the King, the late George VI, had spoken to her when she stood in the crowd. She wanted to say that she'd stolen two rubbers from Elsie Grantham and poured ink all over the face of a clock, and had never been found out.

She closed her eyes, longing to speak, longing above all the things in the world to fill the compartment with the words that had begun, since he'd told her, to rattle in her brain. All he'd ever done on the train was to speak a kind of truth about his mother and the school, to speak in their no man's land, as now and then he'd call it. Tormenting her was incidental; she knew it was. Tormenting her was just by chance, a thing that happened.

His face was like a flint. No love had ever smoothed his face, and while she looked at it she felt, unbearably now, the urge to speak as he had spoken, so many times. He smiled at her. "Yes," he said. "The Reverend's a most revolting man."

"I'm thirty-eight," she said and saw him nod as though, precisely, he'd guessed her age a long time ago.

"Tonight we'll sit together in the bungalow by the sea where my parents live and they'll ask me about the term at Ashleigh. 'Begin at the beginning, Beryl,' my mother'll say and my father'll set his deaf aid. 'The first day? What happened the first day, Beryl?' And I shall tell them. 'Speak up,' they'll say, and in a louder voice I'll tell them about the new boys, and the new members of staff. Tomorrow night I'll tell some more, and on and on until the holidays and the term are over. 'Wherever are you going?' my mother'll say when I want to go out for a walk. 'Funny time,' she'll say, 'to go for a walk.' No matter what time it is."

He turned his head away, gazing through the window as earlier she had gazed through the window of the dining-car, in awkwardness.

"I didn't fall in love with a freckled waiter," he heard her say, "but God knows the freckled waiter would have done."

He looked at her again. "I didn't mean, Miss Fanshawe—"

"If he had suddenly murmured while offering me the vegetables I'd have closed my eyes with joy. To be desired, to be desired in any way at all . . ."

"Miss Fanshawe—"

"BORN BENEATH GEMINI, the sign of passion, you said. Yet who wants to know about passion in the heart of an ugly undermatron? Different for your mother, Carruthers: your mother might weep and tear away her hair, and others would weep in pity because of all her beauty. D'you see, Carruthers? D'you understand me?"

"No, Miss Fanshawe. No, I don't think I do. I'm not as—"

"There was a time one Christmas, after a party in the staff room, when a man who taught Algebra took me up to a loft, the place where the Wolf Cubs meet. We lay down on an old tent, and then suddenly this man was sick. That was in 1954. I didn't tell them that in the bungalow: I've never told them the truth. I'll not say tonight, eating cooked ham and salad, that the boy I travelled with created a scene in the dining-car, or that I was obliged to pay for damage to a waiter's clothes."

"Shall we read now, Miss Fanshawe?"

"How can we read, for God's sake, when we have other things to say? What was it like, d'you think, on all the journeys to see you so unhappy? Yes, you'll probably go to the

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bad. He's right: you have the look of a boy who'll end like that. The unhappy often do."

"Unhappy, Miss Fanshawe? Do I seem unhappy?"

"Oh for God's sake, tell the truth! The truth's been there between us all our journeys. We've looked at one another and seen it, over and over again."

"Miss Fanshawe I don't understand you. I promise you I don't understand—"

"How could I ever say in that bungalow that the Algebra teacher laid me down on a tent and then was sick? Yet I can say it now to you, a thing I've never told another soul."

The door slid open, and a woman wearing a blue hat, a smiling, red-faced woman, asked if the vacant seats were taken. In a voice that amazed Carruthers further Miss Fanshawe told her to go away.

"Well, really!" said the woman.

"Leave us in peace, for God's sake!" shrieked Miss Fanshawe, and the woman, her smile all gone, backed into the corridor. Miss Fanshawe rose and shut the door again.

"It's different in the bungalow by the sea," she then quite quietly remarked. "Not like an American Bar in Copenhagen or the Hotel Excelsior in Madrid. Along the walls the coloured geese stretch out their necks, the brass is polished and in its place. Inch by inch oppression fills the air. On the chintz covers in the sitting-room there's a pattern of small wild roses, the stair-carpet's full of fading lupins. *To W. J. Fanshawe on the occasion of his retirement,* says the plaque on the clock on the sitting-room mantelpiece. *From his friends in the Prudential.* The clock has a gold-coloured face and four black pillars of ersatz material: it hasn't chimed since 1958. At night, not far away, the sea tumbles about, seeming too real to be true. The seagulls shriek when I walk on the beach, and when I look at them I think they're crying out with happiness."

He began to speak, only to speak her name for there was nothing else he could think of to say. He changed his mind and said nothing at all.

"Who would take me from it now? Who, Carruthers? What freckled waiter or teacher of Algebra? What assistant in a shop, what bank-clerk, postman, salesman of cosmetics? They see a figure walking in the wind, discs of thick glass on her eyes, breasts as flat as a pancake. Her movement's awkward, they say, and when she's close enough they raise their hats and turn away: they mean no harm."

"I see," he said.

"In the bungalow I'm frightened of both of them: all my life I've been afraid of them. When I was small and wasn't pretty they made the best of things, and longed that I should be clever instead. 'Read to us, Beryl,' my father would say, rubbing his hands together when he came in from his office. And I would try to read. 'Spell "merchant",' my father would urge as though his life depended upon it, and the letters would become jumbled in my mind. Can you see it, Carruthers, a child with glasses and an awkward way of walking, and two angry figures, like vultures, unforgiving? They'd exchange a glance, turning their eyes away from me, as though in shame. 'Not bright,' they'd think. 'Not bright, to make up for the other.' "

"How horrid, Miss Fanshawe."

"No, no. After all, was it nice for them that their single child should be a gawky creature who blushed when people spoke? How could they help themselves, any more than your mother can?"

"Still, my mother—"

" 'Going to the pictures?' he said the last time I was home. 'What on earth are you doing that for?' And then she got the newspaper which gave the programme that was showing. *'Tarzan and the Apemen,'* she read out. 'My dear, at your age!' I wanted to sit in the dark for an hour or two, not having to talk about the term at Ashleigh Court. But how could I say that to them? I felt the redness coming in my face. 'For children surely,' my father said. 'A film like that.' And then he laughed. 'Beryl's made a mistake,' my mother explained, and she laughed too."

"And did you go, Miss Fanshawe?"

"Go?"

"To *Tarzan and the Apemen*?"

"No, I didn't go. I don't possess courage like that: as soon as I enter the door of the bungalow I can feel their disappointment all round me and I'm terrified all over again. I've thought of not going back but I haven't even the courage for that: they've sucked everything out of me. D'you understand?"

"Well—"

"Why is God so cruel that we leave the

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ugly school and travel together to a greater ugliness when we could travel to something nice?"

"Nice. Miss Fanshawe? *Nice*?"

"You know what I mean, Carruthers."

He shook his head. Again he turned it away from her, looking at the window, wretchedly now.

"Of course you do," her voice said, "if you think about it."

"I really—"

"FUNNY OUR BIRTHDAYS being close together!" Her mood was gayer suddenly. He turned to look at her and saw that she was smiling. He smiled also.

"I've dreamed this train went on for ever," she said, "On and on until at last you stopped engaging passengers and waiters in fantastic conversation. 'I'm better now,' you said, and then you went to sleep. And when you awoke I gave you liquorice allsorts. 'I understand,' I said. 'It doesn't matter.' "

"I know I've been very bad to you, Miss Fanshawe. I'm sorry—"

"I've dreamed of us together in my parents' bungalow, of my parents dead and buried and your thin mother gone too, and Ashleigh Court a thing of the nightmare past. I've seen us walking over the beaches together, of you growing up, of cooking for you and mending your clothes, and knitting you pullovers. I've bought you fresh brown eggs and made you apple dumplings. I've watched you smile over crispy chops."

"Miss Fanshawe—"

"I'm telling you about a dream in which ordinary things are marvellous. Tea tastes nicer and the green of the grass is a fresher green than you've ever noticed before, and the air is rosy, and happiness runs about. I would take you to a cinema on a Saturday afternoon and we would buy chips on the way home and no one would mind. We'd sit by the fire and say whatever we liked to one another. And you would no longer steal things or tell lies, because you'd have no need to. Nor would you mock an unpretty undermatron."

"Miss Fanshawe, I—I'm feeling tired. I think I'd like to read."

"Why should they have a child and then destroy it? Why should your mother not love you because your face is like your father's face?"

"My mother—"

"Your mother's a disgrace," she cried in sudden, new emotion. "What life is it for a child to drag around hotels and lovers, a piece of extra luggage, alone, unloved?"

"It's not too bad. I get quite used to it—"

"Why can He not strike them dead?" she whispered. "Why can't He make it possible? By some small miracle, surely to God?"

He wasn't looking at her. He heard her weeping, and listened to the sound, not knowing what to do.

"You're a sorrowful mess, Carruthers," she whispered. "Yet you need not be."

"Please. Please, Miss Fanshawe—"

"You'd be a different kind of person and so would I. You'd have my love, I'd care about the damage that's been done to you. You wouldn't come to a bad end: I'd see to that."

He didn't want to turn his head again. He didn't want to see her, but in spite of that he found himself looking at her. She, too, was gazing at him, tears streaming on her cheeks. He spoke slowly and with as much firmness as he could gather together.

"What you're saying doesn't make any sense, Miss Fanshawe."

"The waiter said that you were mad. Am I crazy too? Can people go mad like that, for a little while, on a train? Out of loneliness and locked-up love? Or desperation?"

"I'm sure it has nothing to do with madness, Miss Fanshawe—"

"The sand blows on to my face, and sometimes into my eyes. In my bedroom I shake it from my sandals. I murmur in the sitting-room. 'Really Beryl,' my mother says, and my father sucks his breath in. On Sunday mornings we walk to church, all three of us. I go again, on my own, to Evensong: I find that nice. And yet I'm glad when it's time to go back to Ashleigh Court. Are you ever glad, Carruthers?"

"Sometimes I have been. But not always. Not always at all, I—"

" 'Let's go for a stroll,' the Algebra teacher said. His clothes were stained with beer. 'Let's go up there,' he said. 'It's nice up there.' And in the pitch dark we climbed to the loft where the Wolf Cubs meet. He lit his cigarette-lighter and spread the tent out. I don't mind what

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happens, I thought. Anything is better than nothing happening all my life. And then the man was sick."

"You told me that, Miss Fanshawe."

" 'You're getting fat', my mother might have said. 'Look at Beryl, Dad, getting fat.' And I would try to laugh. 'A drunk has made me pregnant,' I might have whispered in the bungalow, suddenly finding the courage for it. And they would look at me and see that I was happy, and I would kneel by my bed and pour out my thanks to God, every night of my life, while waiting for my child." She paused and gave a little laugh. "They are waiting for us: those people, Carruthers."

"Yes."

"The clock on the mantelpiece still will not chime. 'Cocoa,' my mother'll say at half past nine. And when they die it'll be too late."

HE COULD FEEL the train slowing, and sighed within him, a gesture of thanksgiving. In a moment he would walk away from her: he would never see her again. It didn't matter what had taken place, because he wouldn't ever see her again. It didn't matter, all she had said, or all he had earlier said himself.

He felt sick in his stomach after the beer and the wine and the images she'd created, of a life with her in a seaside bungalow. The food she'd raved about would be appalling; she'd never let him smoke. And yet, in the compartment now, while they were still alone, he was unable to prevent himself from feeling sorry for her. She was right when she spoke of her craziness.

"I'd better go and brush my teeth," he said. He rose and lifted his overnight case from the rack.

"Don't go," she whispered.

His hand, within the suitcase, had already grasped a blue sponge-bag. He released it and closed the case. He stood, not wishing to sit down again. She didn't speak. She wasn't looking at him now.

"Will you be all right, Miss Fanshawe?" he said at last, and repeated the question when she didn't reply. "Miss Fanshawe?"

"I'm sorry you're not coming back to Ashleigh, Carruthers. I hope you have a pleasant holiday abroad."

"Miss Fanshawe, will you—"

"I'll stay in England, as I always do."

"We'll be there in a moment," he said.

"I hope you won't go to the bad, Carruthers."

They passed by houses now; the backs of houses, suburban gardens. Posters advertised beer and cigarettes and furniture. *Geo. Small. Seeds.* one said.

"I hope not, too," he said.

"Your mother's on the platform. Where she always stands."

"Good-bye, Miss Fanshawe."

"Good-bye, Carruthers. Good-bye."

Porters stood waiting. Mail-bags were on a trolley. A voice called out, speaking of the train they were on.

She didn't look at him. She wouldn't lift her head: he knew the tears were pouring on her cheeks now, more than before, and he wanted to say, again, that he was sorry. He shivered, standing in the doorway, looking at her, and then he closed the door and went away.

She saw his mother greet him, his mother smiling, in red as always she was. They went together to collect his luggage from the van, out of her sight, and when the train pulled away from the station she saw them once again, the mother speaking and Carruthers just as he always was, laughing his harsh laugh.

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Karl Popper

On Reason & the Open Society

A Conversation

You are primarily a philosopher, but can you tell us a little about your "political" biography?

POPPER: I became a Marxist in about 1915, when I was thirteen years old, and an anti-Marxist in 1919, shortly before my seventeenth birthday. I remained a socialist until I was thirty, although I began to doubt more and more whether freedom and socialism are compatible.

The incident that turned me into an anti-Marxist was of crucial importance. It occurred in my native Vienna. Shooting broke out during a demonstration by young unarmed Socialist and Communist workers, and several of the youngsters were killed. I was horrified and indignant at the police, but also at myself because I felt that, as a Marxist, I bore part of the responsibility—at least in principle—for the tragedy. Marxist theory demands that the class struggle be sharpened and intensified. It asserts that an intensification of the class struggle speeds our approach to socialism and that, although revolution may claim some victims, capitalism daily claims more victims than the whole socialist revolution would ever do.

That was the Marxist analysis. I now asked myself whether we could ever rationally defend such a calculation. I began to read Marx critically, and I discovered what scant foundation there was for the Marxist beliefs in the historical inevitability of the coming of socialism, the prevalence of a malignant social system, and in such notions as that of so-called *Spätkapitalismus*.

What really exists is people, their joys and sorrows. I was, and I still am, an individualist in the sense that I realised that what mattered was that justice should prevail between individuals, and that concepts such as Mankind—let alone Class—are abstractions, perhaps important in some theoretical context, but sometimes exceedingly dangerous. What are we to say, for instance, of those Marxists who are prepared to sacrifice concrete individuals for the sake of an abstract Humanity—who believe that the worse human beings fare, the better it is for the Inevitable Social Revolution, and thus for Mankind? Of course there are conflicts of interest in society, but it is extremely doubtful whether the intensification of these conflicts would lead to a better society or to a worse one (such as, for example, a fascist society).

My critical attitude towards Marxism did not, at first, shake my socialist convictions in the least. To me, socialism was an ethical postulate—nothing more or less than the idea of justice. A social order which managed to combine abject poverty and great affluence struck me as both inequitable and intolerable. However, my growing realisation that institutionalised socialism renders the state too unwieldy and bureaucrats too powerful *vis-à-vis* citizens prompted me to abandon my youthful convictions. I have never regained my belief in the compatibility of socialism and freedom. I have become convinced, moreover, that every simple formula is misleading. If "socialism" means "the socialisation or nationalisation of the means of production", then it is clear that this is not a remedy for all social evils, but rather—and this is most important—a threat to the freedom of the individual.

—But still, politics of another sort changed your life.

POPPER: At the age of twenty-eight I was appointed as a teacher at a secondary school in Vienna. I had written a great deal in the interim, but had published virtually nothing. Encouraged by friends, I now wrote two books. The second of these, published in 1934 under the title *Logik der Forschung*, propelled me, almost against my intentions, into academic life. Austria at that time was ruled by a fascist dictatorship, and I realised that Hitler would soon invade the country and

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make it part of Germany. Being of Jewish descent, I decided to emigrate. My book brought me an invitation to give lectures in England, and on Christmas Eve, 1936, I was offered an appointment as a University lecturer in New Zealand. It was there, in March 1938, that I learned of Hitler's entry into Austria and decided to publish my two critiques of Fascism and Marxism, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *The Poverty of Historicism*. In the spring of 1945 I was offered a post in England, and left New Zealand. I taught at London University from 1946 to 1969 with intermediate spells as a Visiting Professor in America and, for brief periods, in Austria, Japan and Australia. I retired—if that is the right word—three years ago, but I am now working harder than ever.

—How, and where, during these travels did you come to a new view of society?

POPPER: I first visited England in the years 1935-6. Coming from Austria, which, while governed by a comparatively mild dictatorship, was menaced by its National Socialist neighbours, I now found that I could at last breathe freely. It was as if the windows had been flung open. The term "open society" (which, as I later found, had been used by Bergson in a different sense) derives from this experience.

What do I regard as the characteristic features of an open society? I would quote two. First, that free debate and especially debate about the wisdom or otherwise of governmental decisions, should be possible within a society and should exert an influence on politics; and, secondly, that institutions should exist for the protection of freedom and the protection of the poor and the weak.

To take the second point first, the state protects its citizens from physical violence by means of legal and social institutions, and can also shield them from abuse by economic forces. This is already happening, and it is susceptible to improvement. We must, in fact, construct social institutions which protect the economically weak against the economically ruthless. Political power can control economic power. Marxists underrate the potential of politics and, in particular, of what they disparagingly term "formal freedom."

I, therefore, stress the central role of political institutions in social reform. It is far less important *who* governs than *how* governments are influenced and controlled. The old question "Who should rule?", which was regarded as being the central question of political theory from Plato to Marx, is wrongly put. This brings me back to my earlier point, namely, the major significance of public debate. The United States is the most important of those countries which possess a relatively open social order; all the rest are dependent on its fate. Little more than a century has passed since the emancipation of America's Negro slaves, and since the conclusion of almost five years of Civil War between North and South. It was a terrible national crisis: a crisis of conscience. Now the United States is, once again, going through a terrible crisis of conscience with regard to the Negro problem and simultaneously with regard to Viet Nam.

This clearly shows us what is most relevant to the openness of a society: freedom of speech and the existence of an influential opposition. America's major newspapers and the most influential television commentators are sharply critical of government policy. The opposition calls for the withdrawal of American forces from Viet Nam; and the Government has indeed accepted this as its programme at the prompting of the opposition. We encounter here a unique occurrence which would be inconceivable save in an open society: after a war lasting for years, the Government concedes, under the pressure of public debate, that the war was a grievous mistake and should be terminated as soon as possible.

I would not, of course, want to represent American democracy as an ideal. Far too many crimes and acts of violence take place in America. Furthermore the country seems to have changed with remarkable speed since the assassination of President Kennedy. Before that, the mood was one of hope, and of confidence in America's moral superiority. Now, the country is in the throes of a spiritual depression which has been deepened still further by the murders of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and by the war in Viet Nam. The Americans are no longer certain that their country and form of government are the best. These acts of violence may, in part, be a consequence of some American frontier traditions, but they are not a consequence of the form of government or of a so-called authoritarian system. Life styles and convictions do, in fact, change very rapidly in America: open societies are not very stable, precisely because they are exposed to critical discussion. Dictatorships are more stable, and so are utopias, which are always represented as static.

YOU SAY *the state can protect its citizens from economic violence, by means of political institutions. It certainly could do so—but Marxists argue that these same institutions are manned by the ruling groups and therefore become ineffective.*

POPPER: I think this is a gross exaggeration. Every institution in a democracy is manned by different groups—often opposed—at different moments of time. That much is obvious. But the idea that institutions in a democracy are, so to speak,

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permanently controlled by the bourgeoisie is simply a version of the Marxist myth of class dictatorship: that every state is a dictatorial state and that so-called "formal democracy" is nothing more than a class dictatorship. To repeat, I regard that as a fantasy.

—But isn't there evidence of at least elements *of class dictatorship when, as in the West German Republic, 70% of newly created private wealth accrues to the smallest group of "self-employed" persons whereas the seven times larger group of employees is fobbed off with the remaining 30%? When the tax system one-sidedly favours a small section of society? When owners of capital continue to amass wealth without personal effort while most employees are compelled to expend their entire income and can therefore never become owners of capital themselves?*

POPPER: You are posing several questions at once. The word "class" can have many misleading connotations. Marxists claim that all democracies are disguised class dictatorships, but this misleading assertion has little to do with the existence of wide variations in wealth. One can, for example, conceive of a free society which grants equal opportunities to all—all enjoy the same education, and death duties distribute all wealth equally—but which nonetheless exhibits great contrasts in newly-created wealth. Provided there is no poverty, this can scarcely be accounted an evil: large fortunes are almost entirely invested and make it possible to innovate. The same kind of society might also contain extremes of poverty and wealth. And while I should regard this as a great evil, rich and poor would not constitute *classes* in the Marxist sense.

But your remark was aimed at the West German Republic, which you reproached for great inequality in the distribution of newly-created wealth. This proves little about its class character and nothing about a class dictatorship. You also assert that the tax system one-sidedly favours a small section of society. If that be so, democracy has a *remedy* of the sort which can be observed in the British and even in the American systems of taxation. Marx believed that a progressive system of income tax was incompatible with "capitalism", but in Great Britain, a very large part of the national income goes to the state in the form of taxes: income tax, corporation tax, and indirect taxes. (Besides, there are nationalised industries.) But the burden of taxation can become so great that the entire economy—including the lowest-paid—suffers in consequence.

This demonstrates the untenability of the Marxist doctrine that all democracies are disguised dictatorships. And although it may be possible to speak of "elements of class dictatorship," as you did, one may claim with equally strong arguments that the various democracies embody differing degrees of approximation to a classless society.

—Don't you believe that the formally democratic political structure must be based on democracy and equality in the economic sphere before it can become fully alive?

POPPER: Allow me to restate your question in a slightly more primitive form. "Is the coexistence of wealth and poverty an intolerable social evil?" My answer is, yes, poverty is a great evil and becomes still more iniquitous when it coexists with great wealth. More important than the contrast between poverty and wealth, however, is the contrast between freedom and its absence—the contrast between a new class, a new ruling dictatorship, and citizens in disfavour who are banished to concentration camps or elsewhere.

Thus I regard the possibility of free rational discussion and the influence of such critical discussion upon politics as the greatest virtue of a democracy. This places me in diametrical opposition to those who believe in force or violence, particularly to the Fascists and to some adherents of the New Left. Similarly, I am opposed to those revolutionary Marxists or neo-Marxists who assert that there is no such thing as an "objective" discussion: before engaging in a debate with someone they have to be certain that he shares the revolutionary Marxist approach to society—in other words, that he radically rejects the so-called capitalist society of today. This precludes any serious discussion of central problems.

Fascist anti-intellectuals and these revolutionary Marxists are, thus, agreed that one cannot and should not debate with an opponent. Both groups reject all critical discussion of their own standpoints.

But consider what this rejection means. It implies that, once in power, one suppresses all opposition. It implies a rejection of the open society, a rejection of freedom, and an adoption of a philosophy of coercion.

Being influenced by such considerations, Marxists and neo-Marxists are blind to the achievements of democracy, which alone permits them to disseminate their ideas without persecution. Their theory teaches them that political liberties are worthless, or almost so, because they are no more than a cover for a sinister dictatorship.

But this is wholly unrealistic, as one can see from the fact that the recent revival of Marxist ideology has occurred in all the open societies of the West. Democracies are always open to ideas, especially dissenting ideas. Far from being disguised dictatorships, these democracies are always prepared to doubt themselves: they know perfectly well that much is not as it should be.

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Only in an open society do ideas have a chance to prevail, and Marxists, who believe that democracies are merely disguised dictatorships, fail to see that all dictatorships, whether of the Right or Left, are fundamentally similar to each other, and dissimilar to democracies.

All this stems from false theories which are liable to blind us to the importance of the critical battle of ideas, to intellectual debate.

YOUR "OPEN SOCIETY" presupposes a pluralism of forces and universal equality of opportunity which is embodied in the constitutions of the Western democracies. But it does not necessarily form part of political reality. Do you believe that the "open society" already exists, or has it still to be built?

POPPER: I believe it to be both a reality and an ideal. There are, of course, various degrees of openness. In one democracy, society may be more mature, evolved, and open than in another. How good or bad it is will depend on several factors: on its prior history, its traditions, its political institutions, its educational methods and, finally, on the human beings who alone can bring these institutions to life. I would suggest that a fairly sharp distinction should be drawn between democracies and dictatorships. People live in a democracy if institutions exist which enable them to oust their government without using violent means; in other words, without shooting it down. That is the characteristic of a democracy. Even in a democracy, however, the road to a widely open and pluralist society may remain a long one. It is a gradual process; and it is always in danger of a set-back.

—Do you believe, then, in the fundamental power of reason?

POPPER: I do not, of course, believe that an attitude of reasonableness is easy to adopt, or that all human beings are consistently rational: they are only rarely so. Nor do I believe in the "force" of reason or the "power" of reason. Rather, I believe that we have a choice between reason and force. I further believe that reason is the sole alternative to the use of violence; and I regard as criminal the use of force or violence where it could be avoided.

But Marxists nowadays do not believe in reason because they think that all arguments merely conceal or "rationalise" social interests. It is, of course, true that interests—and economic interests in particular—play a major role in politics. It is equally clear, however, that a role is played by very different factors, such as the wish to be just and equitable.

Because it is based on an extremely shrewd speculative theory, Marxist practice is not quite as anti-intellectual as Fascist practice, but it only too often amounts to the same thing: it is, in effect, anti-intellectualistic and irrational, despite its dependence on a somewhat over-intellectualistic and dialectical theory.

Violence embroils one ever more deeply in violence. Violent revolutions kill off revolutionaries and vitiate their ideals. The sole survivors are those who specialise most efficiently in survival.

One certain result of a Revolution of the Left would be the loss of the freedom to criticise and oppose. (Whether the resulting dictatorship is of the Right or Left, reactionary or radical, depends partly on chance, and is often only a difference in nomenclature.) I claim that only a democracy, an open society, gives us a chance to remedy evils. If we destroy a democratic social order by a violent revolution we not only incur responsibility for the heavy casualties that a revolution inflicts but we are also likely to establish a new social order in which it will be impossible to struggle to abolish social evils, injustice, and oppression. As a believer in individual freedom, I am second to none in my detestation of bureaucratic powers and official arrogance. But government is a necessary evil. Total absence of government is an impossibility, and—another regrettable truth—the more people, the more government. Humanity can be very easily destroyed by violence in our time. What is required is that we work for a more sensible society in which our basic conflicts are resolved in an increasingly rational manner.

I said "more sensible". There are, in fact, no sensible societies, but there is always one which, being a little more sensible than the existing one, we should aspire to. That is a realistic demand and not one which is utopian.

—In your "Logic of Scientific Discovery" (1959) and in "Conjectures and Refutations" (1963) you developed a scientific-theoretical approach which has been called "critical rationalism." Another name you give to your views is "fallibilism." Can you explain these ideas?

POPPER: Socrates remarked in his wonderful *Apology*: "I know that I know nothing, and scarcely that—yet the Delphic oracle describes me as the wisest of men." After some reflection, Socrates hit upon the following solution: "I am aware of my ignorance. Perhaps it is this awareness of my limitations which makes me a little wiser than the others, who do not even know that they know nothing." Socrates also said that a politician or a statesman should be wise. What he meant was, a politician ought to be even more aware of his ignorance because a heavy responsibility rests on him. This responsibility should lead him to an understanding of his limitations and so to intellectual modesty.

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I agree with Socrates, and this is the point at which I can best formulate my basic quarrel with modern Marxists. Modern Marxists believe that they know a great deal. They are wholly lacking in intellectual modesty. They flaunt a little knowledge in an oversized terminology.

My reproach does not apply to Marx or Engels. They were formidable and original thinkers who did have new ideas, many of which were not easy to formulate. The man who has something fresh and important to say is concerned to be understood. He will attach the utmost value to writing as simply and comprehensibly as he can, though he may not succeed. Difficult language is the easiest thing in the world to write. What I dislike most in contemporary Marxist intellectuals is their love for the big word, their parade of learning in highly pretentious verbiage. Nothing could be further from their minds than intellectual modesty. They take their cue from Hegel, not from Socrates or from Kant. I believe, like Socrates, that we know little or next to nothing. Our ignorance is vast. But that is clearly not all: we cannot, of course, overlook the existence of the natural sciences and their brilliant successes. Yet when we examine these sciences somewhat more closely we discover that they consist not of positive or certain knowledge, but of bold hypotheses which are continuously improved—or even eliminated altogether—by rigorous criticism. This produces a gradual approximation to the truth. We have, then, no positive or certain knowledge. But there is such a thing as hypothetical or conjectural knowledge.

Above all, there is scientific progress. In critically discussing our hypotheses, we always evaluate them from a definite aspect—we favour those which strike us as a closer approximation to the truth, those which can better withstand our efforts at refutation. Thus there is no point of rest in science, no point at which we can say: "Now at last we have got hold of the truth!" There are only daring hypothetical theories which we endeavour to criticise and to replace by better ones. The more scientific revolutions the better—that is the rule of science. So the Marxian battle-cry—"permanent revolution!"—has at least this validity.

—So you are, at least in this sense, a revolutionary?

POPPER: I have been charged with inconsistency on the grounds that my revolutionary theory of science ought logically to turn me into a political revolutionary. But this is a grave misconception. Radicalism in the theoretical and moral domains —the bold theoretical devising of new revolutionary theories and the subversive critical overthrow of theories old and new—is just what may enable us to avoid all acts of violence in the political domain. To illustrate my thesis more clearly, permit me to compare the struggle for existence in the animal and plant worlds with the "struggle for existence" of our hypotheses.

Plants and animals throw up changes or mutations, and those rare mutations that facilitate better adaptation to the conditions of life are those likely to resist elimination by natural selection. Less well-adapted mutations are eliminated by the extinction of the plants and animals which are the carriers of such bad mutations: they either fail to survive, or produce so few offspring that they ultimately die out. A hypothesis may be compared with a mutation. Instead of producing new mutations, human beings sometimes advance new hypotheses or theories. If they are uncritical, those who support ill-adapted or bad hypotheses are eliminated.

But rational critical discussion enables us to eliminate bad hypotheses and to dismiss them as erroneous without exterminating their authors or proponents. That is the major achievement of the critical method. It enables us to recognise the falsity of hypotheses and to condemn them—without condemning those who support them.

Critical debate is a method which permits our hypotheses to die for us—whereas the uncritical method of the fanatic demands that we testify as martyrs to our hypotheses: if they are faulty, we perish with them. Rigorous criticism, revision, and re-examination of our hypotheses can thus replace the violence of the struggle for existence. In the same way, a revolutionary change in our ideas, theories, or hypotheses can deputise for the violent revolutions which have claimed so many human lives.

It is interesting that I should recently have been labelled a "positivist" in Germany by my Marxist opponents, obviously people who don't quite understand what they are talking about. Positivists are philosophers who oppose speculative theories: they try to adhere as closely as possible to what is "given" or can be perceived. But I try to teach: "be bold in advancing speculative hypotheses but merciless in criticising and re-examining them thereafter."

—You call for revolution in science and thought—but not in practice. You also say that science itself can never provide certain knowledge, only hypotheses which have not—for the moment—been refuted. How does that look from the point of view of social problems?

POPPER: Very similar. We also have ideas and theories in the social sphere. We are deeply indebted to revolutionary social ideas. We evolve theories for the elimination of social ills, try to work out their consequences critically, and then assess our theories accordingly.

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—But what do "social ills" mean in this context? Surely, social defects of this type can only be measured against conceptions of value. How can one prove which of these values are correct and which are not?

POPPER: One cannot, any more than one can prove anything in the natural sciences. But one can discuss the question, and compare various social attitudes and their real effects. In the last analysis the adoption or repudiation of a social value is a matter for decision.

—So one can't ultimately prove one's social or political axioms—only make a personal decision for or against them! Then your idea of the "open society" is founded on a basic decision of this sort, namely, a decision in favour of rationality?

POPPER: Rationalism esteems argument, theory, and empirical examination. But one can't justify one's decision in favour of rationalism by recourse to argument and experience. Although even this problem is open to debate, it ultimately demands from us a human decision—some decision in favour of faith in reason and the value of human lives. This decision in favour of reason is moral and not simply intellectual. It influences our entire attitude to other people and the problems of social life. Closely connected with it is a faith in the rational unity of man, in the value of every human being. Rationalism lends itself better to association with a humanitarian approach than does irrationalism, with its doctrine of the chosen élite. Individual human beings are unequal in many respects, of course; but this does not militate against the claim for equal treatment and equal rights. "Equality before the law" is not a fact but a political demand based on a moral decision. Superiority creates duties rather than rights.

Faith in reason—the other man's reason included—implies the idea of impartiality and tolerance, and includes the rejection of all claims to authority.

IN CONCLUSION, *a question of principle: do you regard revolution, or the forcible imposition of that which is held to be better, as altogether unthinkable?*

POPPER: We must distinguish between revolution against a democracy (including the kind which Marxists call "purely formal") and revolution against a real dictatorship. This, although a legitimate revolution, regrettably seldom succeeds in eliminating it. What is more, the word "revolution" can signify non-violent upheavals as well as violent ones. Marxism has left this ambiguity open; but the historical consequence of violent upheaval has often proved to be a dictatorship. Thus it was with the English revolution of the 17th century, which led to Cromwell's dictatorship; with the French revolution, which led to Robespierre and Napoleon; and with the Russian revolution, which led to Stalin. Violent revolutions which succeed in realising their aims are rare: the American revolution is perhaps the one great exception, but even some of its ideas have been doubtful blessings. I greatly admire, as I made very clear in my *Open Society*, the ideas which inspired the French in 1789 and I am aware of our indebtedness to them. But revolutionary ideas and their supporters are almost invariably destroyed by the revolution itself. Non-violent changes are altogether different. They enable us to watch for the unintended and undesirable consequences of our social policies and to modify their effects in good time when they become manifest. They thus create an atmosphere in which pertinent public criticism of existing social institutions need not be forcibly suppressed, and a social framework which affords human scope for humane reforms.

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In an emergency

You turn off.
The screen, extinguished, screeches;
the room sets hard,
the silence strains.

The basalt phone picks up a hand,
the dial sucks a finger.
In an emergency. . . .

Daniel Weissbort

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Walter Laqueur

America & the Weimar Analogy

Letter from New York

GENERAL INTELLECTUAL interest in the Weimar Republic continues unabated, and for good reasons. It is difficult to think of any other period in modern history which poses so many challenging questions to the student of politics, and there are few from which so many cultural impulses have emanated. A recent conference on "the role of the intellectuals in the Weimar era" at the New School of Social Research in New York attracted a large and distinguished gathering. But since the meeting ranged over so wide a field, any attempt to provide a summary would be futile. What follows is essentially a summary of my own reflections, taking into account some salient points that came up in the discussion.

There was from the beginning a lack of consensus as to the identity of those old-time Central European intellectuals whose role we were to discuss. It may be dangerous, as Karl Bracher pointed out, to invest too much effort in trying to find a generally accepted and all-embracing definition, for the search may lead into a *cul-de-sac*. But equally a lack of clarity in this respect is bound to lead to misunderstandings and even to a *dialogue des sourds*. If Carl J. Friedrich argued that the intellectuals had no role in Weimar politics and were, in fact, of little political importance in most places at any time ("they are committed to principles and have therefore no place in politics") it would not be difficult to think of times and places where these generalisations did not apply—in 1848, for instance; or France around the turn of the century; or Russia in 1917. Unfortunately "intelligentsia" and "intellectuals" mean different things in different countries. The generic term was coined with an eye to men of the Left. But since then intellectuals of all sorts have appeared: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish; reactionary and nationalist; militarist and pacifist. There were, unfortunately, even Fascist intellectuals. The conflicting interpretations of the term may not be entirely accidental, if only because the social origins of the intelligentsia vary from country to country.

When Chernyshevski wrote that "novels, essays and poetry have a far greater significance for us Russians than they have in any other country," he was only stating the obvious—Russian writers were supposed to be the "conscience of the nation". Intellectuals were, on the whole, held in higher esteem in France than in Germany. Heinrich Mann looked with admiration and envy to Paris even before the First World War: "They had it easy, the *littérateurs* of France, who from Rousseau to Zola resisted established power—they had the people on their side, they had soldiers. . . ." Thomas Mann did not originally share his brother's rapture: "An intellectual is one who fights on the side of the *Entente* against Germany and desires its victory," he wrote during World War I. But only a few years later, he took a very different view: "That a German novelist can never aspire to be a national figure such as in France for instance (in *Death in Venice* I pretended he could do it) is a fact that has to be accepted. . . ." The Mann brothers took a somewhat idealised view of the position of the intellectuals in France. But this is perhaps immaterial in this context, for even if the professors were not an outstanding success in French politics (from Guizot and the *Cartel des Gauches* to Léon Blum and Sartre), the distance between the Politician and the *Homme de lettres* was incomparably smaller than in Germany. What the intellectuals said or wrote was a matter of far wider public interest in France than in Germany; it is difficult to imagine an intellectual, a Jaurès or a Léon Blum, as a leader of German Social Democracy.

THE GERMAN *Intelligenz*, such as it was, reached the pinnacle of its influence during the *Vormärz*; later on its influence steadily declined. It is not

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just that it ceased to be liberal and progressive—it was no longer, by and large, politically very active. The thinkers of the Right failed to carry much weight either; Bismarck did not think highly of Treitschke and other such admirers. The *Reichsleitung* during the first World War more or less ignored the moral support of the super-patriotic professors. There were altogether six professors in the *Reichstag* by 1914, none of them outstanding in any way. It was a far cry from the days of Fichte, Schleiermacher, the "Göttingen Seven" and other *praeceptores Germaniae*. It is not even altogether certain that 1848 was the decisive turning-point, for the retreat into the realm of the spiritual, the rejection of political activity (*"politisch Lied, ein garstig Leid"*) antedates the failure of that revolution. As Goethe wrote in a letter to Luden:

> Why should I take up public affairs if these are adequately handled by excellent men—and I can stay in my closet and think of my innermost self. Let the world go its way, and do not get mixed up in the quarrels of kings.

When his advice was ignored and Luden decided to go into politics after all, Goethe angrily commented: "I hate all bungling like sin, especially bungling in affairs of state, from which nothing but misery results for thousands and millions. . . ." Börne and "*Junges Deutschland*" bitterly attacked Goethe for they were firmly convinced that public affairs were not dealt with at all adequately, and that those engaged in these pursuits were anything but excellent men.

IF IT IS DIFFICULT to generalise about the German *Intelligenz* before 1914, it is almost impossible to do so for the period after the first World War. For within the German intelligentsia there were various groups representing totally different attitudes, policies, points of views: political and unpolitical, Left and Right, and some who defied classification altogether. The limelight shifted from time to time. The liberal intelligentsia was *tonangebend* roughly speaking up to the 1860s; the national liberals prevailed up to the end of the first World War, whereas the left-liberal intelligentsia predominated during the 1920s. But it never had the scene all to itself: various factions coexisted in time without even speaking the same language. They occupied, figuratively speaking, separate apartments in the same building. If they met by accident they studiously ignored each other. They had one thing in common: being ashamed of their address. There were exceptions (as Henry Paechter has pointed out): Ernst Jünger and the various *Linke Leute von Rechts*, but how typical were they?

MUCH OF THE RECENT LITERATURE on the Weimar period conveys a somewhat misleading impression, not by what it says but by what it omits. These studies concentrate on Alfred Döblin and Georg Kaiser, on Franz Werfel and Arnold Zweig, and they were indeed among the leading representatives of German culture—in Paris, London, and New York. The situation inside Germany was different. Between 1900 and 1933 forty-three books were published in Germany which sold more than half a million copies. Among them—not counting trivial novels like those of Karl May and Courths-Mahler—there were altogether three which can be classified broadly speaking as "liberal" or Left-of-centre. One was *Buddenbrooks* (published in 1901); a second was Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*; the third Erich Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive*. . . . If one casts one's net a little wider—and counts all books which sold more than 200,000 copies—the picture changes a little, but not very much. Out of 72 books there were only some nine representing the Weimar-Berlin *Zeitgeist*. Two more books by Thomas Mann, Hans Fallada's *Kleiner Mann was nun*, Arnold Zweig's *Sergeant Grischa*, Franz Werfel's *Verdi*, Hermann Hesse's *Narziss und Goldmund*. . . . So much for the thesis of "the stranglehold" of the left-wing, liberal Jewish, Berlin intelligentsia.

At this juncture in our New York sessions, there was a sharp intervention by Miss Hannah Arendt. She pointed out that an analysis of best-seller lists could have unexpected and indeed misleading results. "We did not read these books," she said smilingly; we read Kafka and Rilke,[1] we went to Heidegger and we did not go to Rickert, we sat at Jaspers' feet, and so on. Miss Arendt is, of course, quite right, the liberal-Jewish *Kulturbürgertum*, or more accurately its *avant-garde*, was firmly convinced that there was no other literature, no other philosophy, no other political thought. This public might have just heard about Rudolf Binding, and Eugen Gottlob Winkler, and Hans Carossa. But what self-respecting liberal intellectual ever read *Volk ohne Raum* (1921) or Ernst Juenger's *In Stahlgewittern* (1920) or Felix von Luckner's *See-Teufel* (1921)? It was not, of course, "great" literature; but these books enjoyed a readership far in excess of all the Weimar/Berlin authors. And there were some—such as Jakob Christoph Heer or Eckart von Naso or Bruno von Brehm or Horst Wolfram Geissler—of which no one ("of us") had even heard. Yet it was from *these* books that a whole generation of young (and not so young)

[1] Rilke's *Cornet* sold more than a million copies and the *Stundenbuch* did not do badly either. But of course "we" read only the *Duineser Elegien*.

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Germans took its main inspiration and its deepest ideals. There were, at least since the turn of the century, *two* German literatures; for it was in 1900 that Lienhard had published his tract against the literary predominance of Berlin. (The same refers to philosophy, to the study of law, history, economics, theology, etc.) The liberal intelligentsia spoke with disdain about "*das platte Land*", but the great majority—silent perhaps, but not quite illiterate—did not think that "liberal Berlin", that "democratic Weimar" represented *their* Germany. This was not necessarily the lunatic fringe of the Right with its *völkisch* eccentricities; it was, by and large, the educated middle class.

A quite distorted notion has prevailed of the influence of the "Weimar Intelligentsia" partly based on the Nazi attacks which had, of course, a vested interest in exaggerating the "Jewish-liberal stranglehold." The real situation was very different! The liberal newspapers constituted *a very small part* of the German press; the great majority of papers belonged to Hugenberg and his *Generalanzeiger* concerns, and they were anything but Left in orientation. *Weltbühne* and *Tagebuch*—the two periodicals which are so frequently invoked in our days, reprinted and even translated—had a combined circulation of 15,000, much, no doubt, overlapping. The right-wing critics (to provide another example) were forever complaining about *Kultur-Bolschewismus* affecting the German film industry. But the public was attracted by the heroic presentation of Luis Trenker and Leni Riefenstahl and by "*Stosstrupp 1917*", by patriotic films about Blücher, York and Prince Louis Ferdinand. To make a film about *Sanssouci* (Frederick II's Potsdam castle) was a virtual guarantee for success and there was a whole industry specialising in this genre *(Fridericus Rex, The Old Fritz, The Mill at Sanssouci, Flute Concerto at Sanssouci, The Prima Ballerina of Sanssouci)*.

AMONG THE PAPERS READ at our Conference was a highly informative, if somewhat uncritical, paper on the "Frankfurt School" (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, *et al.*), by Martin Jay, who teaches at the University of California. This provoked some obvious questions, for it highlighted the discrepancy between Weimar myth and Berlin reality. For the Frankfurt school, with all its intellectual merits, really blossomed *only in exile;* its influence before 1933 was, to put it mildly, rather restricted. The same refers to the work of Kafka and Musil, of Walter Benjamin and Hermann Broch, who were known at the time only to small groups of *cognoscenti* and received recognition only much later. If one talks about "Weimar" these days it is always useful to make it clear whether one means the historical Weimar —or the Weimar myth—or the so-called Weimar heritage.

MUCH ATTENTION has been devoted in recent years to the *obiter dicta* of the leading mandarins of the Weimar period. There are always the same references to Hans Delbrück who said that one serves the republic but does not love it, to Friedrich Meinecke's famous dialogue between Eberhard and Reinhold (E.: "You have married democracy without loving it." R.: "If one has nothing which one loves one has to try to love what one has"). And, of course, Ernst Troeltsch ("the Academic class has become more and more Conservative, Monarchist and Nationalistic"). These facts are by now fairly widely known. Like France's Fourth Republic, Weimar was *mal aimée*. But however interesting the views of Delbrück, Meinecke and Troeltsch were, they are quoted mainly in view of the authors' eminence in fields other than politics. They lived in the academic world which, at the time, was a very small world indeed. Neither the politicians, nor the masses, nor even the educated middle class ever took much notice. Whoever wants to find out how the *Selbstverständnis* of the Weimar period developed might do better to study the political views of the teachers during that period, not of the leading philosophers, but of the run-of-the-mill *Lehrer*. ("But surely—these people were not intellectuals?" Perhaps not, but they contributed more than anyone else to the cultural and political outlook of several generations of German intellectuals). The German schoolmaster was by no means always the blind servant of the Monarchy, or the apostle of pan-Germanism, as he is so often described. In fact, during the early part of the 19th century the teachers were considered "rebellious" and "disloyal", and after the defeat of the revolution of 1848 instructions were given to transfer the educational seminaries from the big cities to the small towns as yet unaffected by the rebellious spirit. The teachers became "ideologically integrated" only towards the end of the century. Having been broadly speaking a Man of the Left, the German teacher turned to the Right, whereas in France the opposite process took place among the *enseigneurs*. No one, to the best of my knowledge, has tried as yet to explain this process.

A closer look shows that it is dangerous to generalise about teachers. There was a tremendous distance between secondary and primary school teachers—the *Studienrat* and the *Volksschullehrer*, the latter being much nearer in outlook and sentiment to the working class. During the First World War Paul Keller wrote: "The elementary schoolteachers were the poorest

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but the strongest apostles of *Deutschtum*. Without them we would have lost the War long ago. . . ." I should have mentioned Keller earlier; he is another example for the concept of the "two literatures." His name will not be found in the new works on Weimar Culture even though just two of the novels of this Silesian teacher (*Waldwinter* and *Ferien vom Ich*) probably sold more copies than the works of the whole Mann family. But it is also true that the elementary schoolteacher was critical of many aspects of German politics and society before 1914 and, on the whole, many welcomed the 1918 revolution. Many had advocated for a long time a democratic educational reform—a narrowing of the gap between the existing school systems—and this corresponded with the educational programme of the Social Democrats. Furthermore, whether of the Left or the Right, he resented the encroachments of the churches who wanted to regain their dominant position in the field of education. During Weimar's first years, the teachers gave the republic a great deal of credit; they were willing to cooperate. According to a comparative study of German textbooks in the field of history and civics, the attitude of the books used in elementary schools was far more positive than the ones in high schools. (Nine were written in a positive vein, 12 were neutral, and only one opposed it. The figures for the high school were 10, 15, and 16 respectively!)

As far as the political attitudes of the Weimar intelligentsia after 1918 are concerned, there were two major turning-points. The one occurred fairly early in 1919-20, the other around 1929-30.[2] But there is no doubt that the Right had been shocked and disorientated by the military defeat in 1918, above all perhaps by the ignominious part played by the generals. Everyone, including the Conservatives, talked about "revolution" (at least spiritual revolution) and about "socialism" (or at least nationalisation). It was all very nebulous. No two people really meant the same thing. The old order had failed, the Right was temporarily reduced to silence, and the Left had it almost all their own way. But the inability of the Social Democrats to provide strong leadership in both domestic and foreign affairs caused a rapid dissipation of the democratic-republican enthusiasm which had not been very deeply rooted anyway, and the Right gathered courage.[3]

THE YEARS BETWEEN 1923 and 1929 were the *Blütezeit* in every respect. There was not much political commitment, not even much interest among the intelligentsia. The writings even of the Left-wingers during that period betray a great deal more innocence, not to put it more strongly. In 1926 Mussolini was no longer a newcomer on the political scene; two years after the murder of Matteotti there should not have been many illusions about the character of Fascism. But the attitude of many on the liberal-Left among the intelligentsia was by no means one of outright opposition. Kurt Hiller wrote an admiring essay in the *Weltbühne* about the *Kraftkerl* Mussolini. Kurt Tucholsky said in the same journal that two powers in Europe had succeeded in carrying out their aims: the Fascists and the Soviets.

> The decisive factor in their victories was their courageous intransigence.

About Fascism in France he wrote that it was above all a "spiritual attitude" which had nothing whatsoever in common with the activities of the German hooligans. In that same year Ernst Bloch and Werner Benjamin wrote essays about Italy in which they managed to survey the Italian scene *without ever once mentioning the fact* that a fascist régime was in power in that country! (It should be said in mitigation that intellectuals elsewhere reacted in a similar way, or worse—Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, for instance.)

The need to "join forces" was discussed in 1926 by the Left intelligentsia: "We do not need your tactics and your tolerance and your discipline," Tucholsky wrote in reply to a Social Democrat—"we need the revolutionary, intransigent success of the militant fighter in the class struggle." But 1926 was hardly the right moment for revolutionary intransigence; there had been a revolutionary situation in Germany immediately after the War—but never since. All the Left intellectuals could have done in the 1920s was to rally forces in defence of the Republic. Instead they engaged in their favourite pastime of "Ebert-baiting." Their attitude to the Republic was not political but *aesthetic*. The Republic lacked *style* (as Pachter puts it) and therefore they despised it.

It seems so obvious (in retrospect) that to be effective in politics the intellectuals should have "chosen sides", that however repugnant the existing political parties, there was no alternative to working from within these parties. They were admittedly neither attractive nor of very friendly disposition to the intellectuals. The Social Democrats had always distrusted

[2] This thesis came under fire—perhaps rightly: periodisation is always a risky business. Perhaps, as Professor René Koenig once said, the 1920s were over before they had really started. Perhaps the Inflation was the decisive turning point: the pauperisation of the middle class and the resulting lack of security.

[3] See: John R. P. McKenzie, *Weimar Germany, 1918-1933*. Blandford Press, £2.80, paper £1.25.

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them; and in the Weimar era they kept them from positions of influence. There was Rudolf Hilferding, in demand as an economic expert but he did not really count inside the Party apparatus; Rudolf Breitscheid perhaps, but his influence was restricted to the Parliamentary party. The typical Social Democrats were Friedrich Ebert, Philip Scheidemann, Otto Wels, the Party and Trade Union secretaries. The Left intelligentsia despised them and poked fun at them both because they were not revolutionaries and because they were "Philistines." They lacked energy and charisma; they had no liking for modern art; they would not get excited about paragraphs 175 (homosexuality) and 218 (abortion) in the criminal code. They were "fat men in shirt sleeves, sausage-eating, beer-drinking *Spiesser*." They were also staunch democrats—but this did not matter for they lacked "inspiration and style", and this was far more in demand than mere democratic principles.

THE COMMUNISTS were in the beginning largely a party of intellectuals, but these were gradually squeezed out from the leadership; the transition from Paul Levi to Ernst Thälmann was symptomatic. The intellectuals were still attracted by the militancy of the Communists which was indeed in striking contrast to the lethargy of the Social Democrats. But with the progressive Stalinisation of the party it became more and more difficult for them to remain loyal. There were quite a few fellow-travellers among the intelligentsia but not many party members. It was no coincidence that after 1929 the intellectuals found themselves mainly with the small splinter groups of the Left—the *SAP*, the Nelson Bund, *KPO*, the Trotskyites, and others.

It would be difficult to think of any major writer or thinker who gave unqualified support to the Social Democrats; when Thomas Mann came out (with many reservations) in favour of the *SPD* it was very late in the day. The German Left was politically homeless; it could not identify itself with any of the existing political parties. To the extent that it had a spiritual home it was outside Germany. One followed with sympathy, even enthusiasm, "the Soviet experiment"; Russian novels were widely read and Russian movies admired. But it was in some ways like the attitude (until recently) of the American Left towards Fidel Castro: here was an exciting, wholly admirable venture, but alas with no "universal message."

German intellectuals—unlike the aristocracy—had never been greatly attracted by Britain. Shaw was widely read, so was Galsworthy; but as a cultural centre London did not exist. America was even more distant and somewhat frightening, the country of gangsters and soulless machinery, with Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Jackie Coogan as the only redeeming factors. But there was one country, or to be precise one city, to which the German intellectuals felt irresistibly drawn: Paris. They found a greater affinity with that city (or to be precise, with their vision of Paris) than with their own country. In Paris the men were more polite, the girls prettier, the children more graceful; the city had style and *savoir vivre*. This curious love affair was largely based on a double misunderstanding—for Germany was not a cultural desert and Paris not very much of an oasis. French sophistication was sometimes not much deeper than the famous Viennese charm. The French intellectual establishment of the day was by no means wholly admirable. Seen in retrospect, Berlin in the 1920s was the most creative and interesting place. But the disillusionment of the German intellectuals came only years later in the internment camps of Gurs and Vernet. The love affair with France opened them to charges of lack of dignity and patriotism. (But was not "patriotism" a mere synonym for chauvinism?) Unlike the French and British varieties, patriotism in Germany was not a deeply engrained feeling shared by Left and Right alike, about which people seldom talked and hardly ever reflected.

THE 1920s WERE, on the whole, an unpolitical period; the trend toward political commitment and radicalisation began only in 1928-29. Some writers had sensed it a little earlier. They were good seismographs though not always able to predict where the earthquake was actually to take place. Several hitherto unpolitical writers suddenly produced works containing a fairly clear political message: *Sergeant Grischa, Mario und der Zauberer, Erfolg, Wissen und Verändern*. But it was precisely during this period, in the last few years of the Weimar Republic, that the lack of political influence on the part of intellectuals became so palpably obvious. The struggle proceeded in the streets, the political assemblies, the beer halls, the party headquarters—*anywhere* but in the places frequented by the Intellectuals!

The whole issue of the intellectual responsibility of the Left intelligentsia should, therefore, be seen in true perspective. They were not just outsiders, they were a marginal group, unable to agree among themselves about almost anything. They were facing overwhelming odds; the tide ran against them almost from the beginning. Even if they would have rallied without exception to the defence of the Republic, it would have made (in all probability) no difference whatsoever. Many intellectuals must have sensed it at the time, and the feeling of impotence (of whatever-you-do-it-does-not-matter) was conducive to

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sectarianism, and to irresponsible behaviour. Their heart was usually in the right place, but they were not really political animals. Most of them lacked elementary political insight, and judgment, and the ability to understand and to analyse concrete political situations. When they came down to earth from their flights of pure thought and metaphysical speculations they were prone to commit the most elementary errors, to be taken in by the most obvious frauds. There was an unwillingness to take responsibility, based on the appalling assumption that to display the correct posture was more important than to do the right thing. Their political attitude was often impressionistic, and romantic.[4]

At any rate it would be unfair in the last resort to judge the Weimar intellectuals by political criteria of "success or failure". They strove for the Liberation of the Self; their realm was not of this world.

Where were "the intellectuals"—as a group, not as individuals—who ever achieved that much better? Weimar One—*i.e.* the Germany of Goethe and Schiller, Hegel and Kant? Their political record was not impressive. The Italians perhaps—so many of whom collaborated with Fascism while the going was good? The British in the late 1930s, or the French under Nazi occupation? The American intelligentsia in the late 1960s?

POLITICS SHOULD NOT BE the main yardstick. What, in historical perspective, was the importance of the Weimar-Berlin era? Was it "the new Periclean age" (as it is frequently praised now) or a derivative age of imitators? Almost forty years have passed, and it should be possible to appraise with some detachment the place in history of this group of men and women. The *legend* of Weimar ought to be debunked; but beyond the myth there was an astonishing amount of creativity and vitality, and the administration of issues (although not their solution) which still preoccupy us. Measured by standards of the highest excellence, it was certainly not one of the greatest ages; it produced no Leonardo, or Shakespeare, or Goethe or Beethoven. But in an imperfect world (and compared with the achievements of the intellectuals as a group elsewhere in recent history) it is difficult not to be impressed by these men and women who created the spiritual substance which to a large extent sustains to this day the whole Western world. The only comparable group that comes to mind is the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia—equally problematical in some respects, equally vital and seminal.

THE DEBATE ON the Weimar Analogy seems to me to be on the wane and this, needless to say, is connected with the de-escalation of the American crisis. Of late, the Weimar experience has been quoted mainly by those who fear that the seizure of power by American fascism is just around the corner. As Professor Philip Slater, a sociologist at Brandeis, has written in his *Pursuit of Loneliness*[5] a coup from the Right could come at any time especially since the machinery now existed for placing every Left or liberal leader in

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[4] Basically, many of them were not really interested in politics. Their decision to take sides however natural against the background of the Weimar crisis sometimes produced strange results. In this respect contemporary America offers an interesting parallel, and the writings of Miss Hannah Arendt (half-Weimar, half-American), are as good an example as any.

In a recent essay on "Lying in Politics" (*New York Review of Books*, 18 November 1971) Miss Arendt refers to the many untruths and half-truths uttered by American politicians on the subject of Viet Nam, their "deception, self-deception, ideologising and defactualisation." But politicians have no monopoly in this respect.

And if they will no doubt plead mitigating circumstances what excuse is there for the "defactualisation" in historical studies—for instance, in a book like Miss Arendt's *Eichmann* volume (see the review by John Gross, "Arendt on Eichmann," ENCOUNTER, November 1963) replete with statements such as "it was generally known that Heydrich was a half-Jew"?

In the same article Miss Arendt makes some scathing remarks about the anti-Communism of the cold warriors, "the post-war comprehensive ideology to explain and reliably to foretell the course of history," "their sheer ignorance of all the pertinent facts," and so on. Yet Dr Arendt happened to be a prominent ideologist of this doctrine, and in a rather sweeping and extreme form at that. "Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia", she wrote in 1951, are "two essentially identical systems" (*The Burden of Our Time*, p. 429). About the aims of Soviet policy she had this to say:

> "the struggle for total domination of the total population of the earth is inherent in the totalitarian régimes themselves; if they do not pursue global rule as their ultimate goal, they are only too likely to lose whatever power they have already seized." (p. 378)

The "long-range goal of world conquest" figures prominently in Dr Arendt's book, and the conduct of totalitarian foreign policy was said to proceed "on the consistent assumption that they will eventually achieve this ultimate goal. They therefore consider no country as permanently foreign, but on the contrary every country as their potential territory" (p. 394). John Foster Dulles, I believe, never went as far as that.

Perhaps one should not make too much of these inconsistencies. In the contemporary storms shaking the New York teacups Miss Arendt is still, generally, a lighthouse of sobriety and good sense.

[5] Philip E. Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness*. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £2.25.

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the country into "concentration camps". Should military groups ever decide to shrug off civilian control, a "single order" was all that would be required to eliminate all active opponents to the Right; "the likelihood of this happening increases daily." But these lines were written more than two years ago. The concentration camps are still empty, and the free-floating hysteria has found different outlets.

President Nixon's announcement of the "wage price freeze" was interpreted by an economics professor as a "leap into fascism". But this seems, on balance, to be the exception rather than the rule: even Herbert Marcuse has recently issued a warning to his followers to stop "loose talk about fascism" (in a recent interview in *Der Spiegel*). According to Professor Bertram M. Gross, "model fascism" in America will have neither a charismatic leader nor a one-party system; it will be pluralist, post-industrialist, and there would not be much (if any) repression either! Society will not be militarised, the legislature not dissolved. But such a "friendly neighborhood fascism", as Theodore Draper said,[6] seems only distantly related to the German model. Carl Schorske and Geoffrey Barraclough, Hans Morgenthau and Hans Speier—speaker after speaker—stressed that the Weimar situation was *sui generis*, that the dissimilarities between the First German Republic and present-day America were certainly more striking than parallels. True, there had been a weakening of democratic legitimacy, and an alienation of youth from democratic society, and a rampant anti-intellectualism and an advocacy of violence. But, to quote Draper again, Weimar was not the first and not the only case of a democracy in trouble; and such a crisis could assume many quite different political and cultural forms.

DURING THE SIXTIES there was a breathtaking revival of interest in the U.S.A. in certain aspects of the "Weimar heritage", in its literature and philosophy, its architecture and its cinema. On the political level the Stalinist theory of "Social fascism" appeared in new gear. If the German Communists had regarded Democratic Socialism as "the main enemy" and Nazism as "the lesser evil", the attitude of the American New Left towards the supporters of parliamentary democracy was rather similar. The cult of violence in Weimar had been the preserve of the extreme Right; transplanted to America it found a home on the other extreme of the political spectrum. One could have pointed to other similarities; the contempt for the "System", the cult of unreason and intolerance. But, above all, there was a feeling of "crisis", of growing *polarisation* and lack of consensus which rightly disquietened a great many people. Far from being a period of revolutionary upsurge there was a feeling of confusion, decadence, and disintegration which manifested itself in culture and politics alike. In this specific situation the analogy did *not* appear that fanciful. People have always looked to bygone ages in order better to understand their own troubled times. During the French Revolution it was customary to look to ancient Rome for guidance and symbols, whereas the French 19th-century decadents were fascinated by the decline of the Roman Empire. Such preoccupation with the past is certainly not futile if one is aware of the built-in limitations of historical analogies. In the hands of the uninitiated and the reckless the search for "lessons" can be disastrously misleading.

But the very fact that the question came up on this occasion was symptomatic; a year or two earlier it would not have been put so openly and sceptically. The American crisis is not over, but its causes are now better understood and the confusion has somewhat lessened. It is no doubt gratifying that part of the Weimar cultural heritage was rediscovered and re-adapted during the last decade; the discoverers could have done worse. But much of this was trendy, as it now appears, and it did not go very deep. A bit of Korsch, a touch of Benjamin, and a little Reich, a packet of Brecht and a valise-full of Lukács became part—but not an indispensable part—of fashionable American cultural-ideological luggage, together with much other bric-à-brac imported from all over the globe.

But since intellectual fashions in America do not on the whole last very long, one suspects that some of the magic names which have figured so prominently of late will in a few years time be again the preserve of the experts—the historians of ideas. The faddists will no doubt find new objects for their cults. The "Weimar heritage", being firmly embedded in the cultural tradition of our times, can afford a little neglect on their part: it is not likely to be forgotten soon.

[6] See: Theodore Draper, "The Specter of Weimar," *Commentary*, December 1971.

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Ice Age

Arctic air rolls down from Greenland to us:
Blizzard steam, then a green light in the sky.
I sit and write in a draughty study,
A sheet of newspaper tucked up inside my back.
Under the lamp I try to listen to my mood:
But all I see is a long white landscape
Covered with figures scampering in the snow,
Blue shadows in the sun, and the soft drift stuff
Flying off my shovel in a freeze wind.
All our blood goes out, to the white cliffs
Curling over the banks, the cars buried, ice
Like sculptured glass under one's feet.
Snowball hysteria, skidding down hills on sledges,
The car handles sticking to one's fingers,
Children crying with cold, and the needle-fern magic
On the morning windows: one of our three-day Ice Ages,
Itself a mad poem in uncharitable February:
We too wild with snow sports to be introspective,
Snowballing one another, and you, cackling like a child,
As you plough head first down the snow-packed steps
On a wooden tea-tray, in the garden after dark!

David Holbrook

Yogis at Chowpatty Beach

Only their heads are visible
As if decapitated, or on cocktail sticks,
Bodies in coffins of sand, beards floating.
It is a way of detachment. Bhelpuri stalls,
Lentils and chutney under glass, herbs, onions,
Their awnings striping the beach
Like bathing huts, do not disturb them.
They are immune to the smells of spices.

The ocean is bronze, the horses
And cows plodding its edge, black.
Tonight, sunset has silenced politics,
There are no speakers
In the shadow of Tilak, stone orator,
No cries of corruption, fist-shakings.

Instead, the dynamic of silence,
Vertical yellow disposed
By saddhus. On Tilak
Marigold wreaths are bruised to saffron.
And, hoisting their dhotis,
Clerks open umbrellas as insurance,
Wading to a backcloth of dhows,
The Arabian sea under surveillance.

Alan Ross

The Discriminator

I can afford to discriminate
In the matter of female pulchritude
Though I will readily admit
That, to many observers, my attitude
Must seem pernickety, even absurd.
This, of course, is not the way of it
Though I understand why the less fastidious
Call me poseur or hypocrite.
Take that girl over there—fine tits
I will concede, but her ankles are too thick.
Her eyes are splendid, opalescent, dark
As a glass of stout held up to light,
But the mouth is so slack as to make you sick.
Her blonde companion, I must remark,
Is far too wide in the hips. She might
Be pretty enough, but in a style
So commonplace you must have seen
The same face in a hundred city streets.
I note your disbelieving smile.
Don't be deceived young man; the time
Will come when you, too, will apply
The cool astringent judgment you observe
My exercising now. Your eye
Will be, as mine, fastidious and cold,
And you will then display the calm
Wisdom and discernment of the old,
Enjoy the wages of experience,
Reject expediency and compromise
With the stern impartiality of age
And age's impotence.

Vernon Scannell

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Column

FOR EUROPEAN civilisation, one of the most damaging consequences of the Bolshevik revolution was the profound, perhaps by now unbridgeable gulf that was thereby opened between the West and the East. The Europe that extended from the Atlantic to the Urals, which had once been a reality, no longer existed and had become merely a dream of General de Gaulle's.

This was certainly not a consequence which was foreseen or desired by the Bolshevik leaders who were primarily responsible for making the revolution. Themselves the intellectual children of the West, they regarded their own victory in Russia as a kind of aberration in the dialectic of history, a fringe benefit, precarious and highly provisional, which could only be made secure by the triumph of revolution in the West.

This belief they cherished long after events in the West had shown that their hopes were not likely to be realised; and indeed those of them who recognised how far the revolution had fallen short of their aims attributed it primarily to the failure of the West to come to their aid. The revolution in Russia had been forced to develop in enforced isolation, starved of the assistance it required, and the result was to be seen, as in a child suffering from malnutrition, in stunted growth and misshapen limbs.

Yet, under the stress of events, of war, civil war, foreign intervention, famine, economic collapse, by their own acts the Soviet leaders further increased Russia's isolation, introducing measures of dictatorship, repression, censorship, police rule, terrorism which made any fruitful collaboration with working-class movements in the West impossible. In the end they found they had created a Frankenstein's monster which devoured them and their children. It was left to Stalin to announce that this hideous ogre, far from being a travesty of all their hopes, was in fact their living and resplendent apotheosis.

HE WAS SO FAR successful that, whatever his victims may have thought, large numbers of people were to be found in the West who accepted his claims without question. It is one of the greatest ironies of history that, at a time when Stalin's terror was at its height, the prestige of the Soviet Union, as the last best hope of mankind, never stood higher in Western radical and intellectual circles. Such a feat of deception was only possible, even with a willing audience, because of the total and absolute control established by Stalin over every means of communication, both within the Soviet Union, and between the Soviet Union and the outside world. On the one side, that of the Soviet Union, there was total suppression of all forms of information unacceptable to the régime; on the other, that of the West, a willing suspension of disbelief which enabled communist propaganda to persuade a large and influential body of public opinion that the Soviet Union was everything, and more, that its founding fathers had dreamed of. Out of this combination of ruthless censorship and infinite gullibility there grew the image of Stalin as the Father of his people, the genial Uncle Joe of wartime legend, and of his people as his loving children.

Only ignorance and wish-fulfilment could explain why otherwise rational people should have accepted this legend. Nevertheless, it persisted up to Stalin's death, though slightly damaged from time to time by the confessions, memoirs, revelations of some of those who had experienced the reality which lay behind it; though these, after all, could be discounted and discredited by the devout as fabrications designed to satisfy the demands of Western intelligence services. It was seriously chipped, after the war, by the performance of communist parties wherever, in the liberated countries, they were able to exercise power, even if only for a short time and in limited areas; direct experience of their methods and practices provided an inoculation, as it were, against further infection. Nevertheless, the legend still survived such minor setbacks, and indeed gained strength from the efforts of some Western historians and writers to show that Stalin, if slightly rough in his methods, was indeed a great historical figure who, if one could rise superior to bourgeois prejudice, could be seen to have deserved well of the country and of the world.

THE BLOW which wrecked the Stalin legend irretrievably, so far as the West was concerned, though not perhaps for the Soviet Union, came after his death, and it was appropriate that it should have been delivered by a Russian; for just as it was the Russians alone who had the power to suppress the evidence of his crimes, so they alone were in a position to reveal their enormity. The turning point came with the delivery of Khrushchev's famous speech of 1956 to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and with the process of "de-Stalinisation", the dismantling of the "cult of personality", by which it was followed. As

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the contents of Khrushchev's speech became known abroad, and as the evidence accumulated of the crimes of the Stalin régime, the legend of Uncle Joe withered away, and even communists have hardly had the heart to try and restore it.

Yet in Russia itself, the Thaw which followed Khrushchev's speech did not last for long; it reached its highest point with the publication, with Khrushchev's approval, in *Novy Mir* in 1962 of Solzhenitsyn's story *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, and thereafter the ice began to congeal again. Today, the efforts of the Soviet leaders are devoted to rehabilitating, not Stalin's victims, but Stalin himself, and to restoring to his name and his policies something of the prestige of which Khrushchev so roughly stripped them.

Yet even if the ice is closing in again, the Thaw released certain forces which it has been impossible to control or suppress absolutely. The relaxation of the censorship under Khrushchev, the attempt to curb the arbitrariness and illegality which infected the Soviet régime, the recognition that an advanced modern state, such as the Soviet Union claims to be, cannot function effectively without some measure of intellectual freedom, however limited, constituted a step forward which could not be entirely retraced.

THE SOVIET LEADERS have indeed attempted to do so. Since the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, they have tried to restrict the consequences of the Thaw as much as possible, and their attempt has been marked by a series of arbitrary and illegal measures taken against writers, artists, intellectuals, scientists who have tried to exercise the right of criticism and freedom of expression for which the process of de-Stalinisation had given them a taste which, once indulged, it has proved impossible to extirpate.

Of such measures Solzhenitsyn himself has been one of the most notable victims, but he has been only one among many and, so far at least, has not had to endure the more extreme forms of persecution to which his companions in misfortune have been exposed. Among these one may mention Josif Brodsky, Andrei Sinyavsky, Yuli Daniel, General Grigorenko, Anatoli Marchenko, Andrei Amalrik, Yuri Galanskov, Alexander Ginzburg, Natalya Gorbanevskaya, Pavel Litvinov, Zhores Medvedev, whose names have become familiar through reports in the Western press; but to these names should be added many others more obscure—those who, on a variety of grounds, have provoked the displeasure of the Soviet authorities and have shared the same heavy sentences of imprisonment, committal to mental hospitals, hard labour, exile, under the inhuman conditions which, now as ever, are a normal feature of the Soviet penal system.

It would be easy in such cases to see merely another turn of the screw in the Soviet government's effort to contain the effects of de-Stalinisation. And from one point of view, indeed, that is, alas, what they are. Yet at the same time they have certain features which seem to show that such efforts are counter-productive and that, in certain respects at least, de-Stalinisation has proved to be irreversible. For what characterises such cases is not merely the arbitrary and illegal procedures which they involve. It is that they have provoked a series of protests, demonstrations, manifestos which would have been unthinkable before the Thaw and in so doing have created among these Soviet dissidents and nonconformists an admirable spirit of solidarity and mutual aid which justifies one in regarding them as a united opposition movement of a kind which has never previously existed under Soviet rule. What is more, and possibly more important, that movement has by now succeeded in creating its own characteristic forms of publicity, within the Soviet Union and outside, both for its efforts to achieve some measure of liberalisation and for the abuses against which they are directed.

THE CRIMES of Stalin took place behind a veil of impenetrable obscurity; their infamy was only equalled by the secrecy which surrounded them. The lesser crimes of his successors are committed in what is, by contrast, almost a blaze of publicity. There are three ways in particular by which the victims of official persecution, and those who sympathise with them, have found it possible to evade the restrictions imposed by Soviet censorship. One is the astonishing flood of *samizdat* (that is to say, privately published) literature which today circulates underground in the Soviet Union and which the Soviet Government seems unwilling or unable to suppress. The second is the device of publishing abroad such works as are not likely to meet the demands of the Soviet censorship; to this we are indebted for being able to read *Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle*, the writings of Amalrik and Marchenko and other works which have immensely increased our knowledge of what Soviet life is like in practice. The third is the publication within the Soviet Union itself of objective and factual reports of the proceedings in cases which abuse the provisions both of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet Constitution; the most outstanding example of this is of course the admirable *Chronicle of Current Events*, founded in 1968 as the Soviet underground's contribution to the United Nations' Human Rights Year, but still continuing publication today because, as the *Chronicle* has said, the struggle for human rights

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in the Soviet Union did not cease when 1968 was over.

Together, these three channels of information throw what is in many ways a new light on the workings of the Soviet system; they allow us, as it were, to see it from within and from underneath, rather than from outside and from above. The *Chronicle of Current Events*, in particular, has distinguished itself by the consistent accuracy and objectivity of its reports; in the four years of its existence it has established, under conditions of immense difficulty, a reputation for reliability which any scientific journal might envy.

For most general readers in the West, however, access to the *Chronicle* is likely to be restricted to such extracts as are made available to them from time to time through the press, and though the press has been quick to recognise the *Chronicle*'s unique value as a source of information, and to draw freely upon it, a series of necessarily disconnected extracts gives no adequate general picture of the *Chronicle*'s achievement. One is deeply grateful therefore to Mr Peter Reddaway for the complete text of the *Chronicle* which he has now published, together with an excellent introduction and admirably full and detailed notes.[1] It is fortunate also that *Uncensored Russia* should now be followed by Mr Abraham Rothberg's *The Heirs of Stalin*, which gives a general account of the relations between the Soviet leadership and the intelligentsia since the death of Stalin, and places the admirably bare bones of the *Chronicle*'s reports, and the liberalising movement in which it has played so important a part, in their historical context.[2]

It is legitimate to speak here of "the movement", because of the remarkable consistency of aim and temper of mind which unites those who are committed to it. At the same time, it has to be recognised that they constitute a very restricted group of individuals who, numerically at least, have little importance by comparison with the inert mass of the vast majority of the Soviet people; Mr Reddaway estimates their number as no more than two thousand. It is indeed, perhaps, their very limitation in numbers which gives to their writings and activities so personal a tone, which is remarkable above all for its sobriety and restraint, a modesty both in their methods of expression and in the ideas by which they are inspired.

THE NUMERICAL WEAKNESSES of "the movement" have led most Western observers to conclude that it is at most nothing more than a voice crying in the wilderness, and that, however much it may command our admiration, it is not likely to make a serious impact on the still unshaken monolith of Soviet power. Mr Rothberg indeed gives one plenty of reasons for thinking that, if and when the Soviet government should decide that its activities were no longer tolerable, it would have no difficulty in crushing it completely, and in doing so could act without fear of provoking any reaction from the great mass of the Russian people. Yet at the same time his own account of the relationship between the Kremlin and the intelligentsia emphasises that repression would entail very particular risks and difficulties; indeed that "the movement" is directed at so delicate a point in the Kremlin's protective covering as to present it with a dilemma of which the Soviet régime has been able to grasp neither the one horn nor the other.

The initial inspiration behind Khrushchev's attempt to dismantle the Stalinist régime was the recognition that the terror had become a barrier to the Soviet Union's continued material progress; the very nature of the new technologies on which it depends made them incompatible with a régime which suppressed totally freedom of thought, discussion and communication. For they involve a continuous process of scientific discovery, and equally the rapid application of its results to the processes of production; neither is possible in a system in which intellectual activity must conform to the Marxist dogmas of the Politburo or the apprehensions of a bureaucracy which regards all change as a threat to its existence. For this reason, a relaxation of Stalinist terror was indispensable. Yet once relaxed, it was impossible to conceal any longer the enormity of its crimes, or, even more, the responsibility for them, which Stalin had shared with those who were now his heirs. Who else had collaborated more enthusiastically in them than those who succeeded him? It was comparatively easy to open the Soviet concentration camps and allow their surviving victims to return home; but what was to be done with those who had sent them there and who were now in power?

The essence of "the movement's" demands is for a return to legality, and therefore to justice. But justice cannot be done without identifying the guilty and locating responsibility for their crimes. The existence of "the movement" is a perpetual reminder to the Soviet leadership that any relaxation of the restrictions set on free enquiry and discussion necessarily involves a threat to their own prestige and authority. For them, the ghost of Stalin is always knocking at the door, and so far they have found no means of exorcising it. *R*

[1] *Uncensored Russia. The Human Rights Movement. The Annotated Text of the Unofficial Moscow Journal "A Chronicle of Current Events."* Edited with an introduction by PETER REDDAWAY. Jonathan Cape, £5.

[2] *The Heirs of Stalin. Dissidence and the Soviet Régime 1953–70.* By ABRAHAM ROTHBERG. Cornell University Press, $14·50, £6·90.

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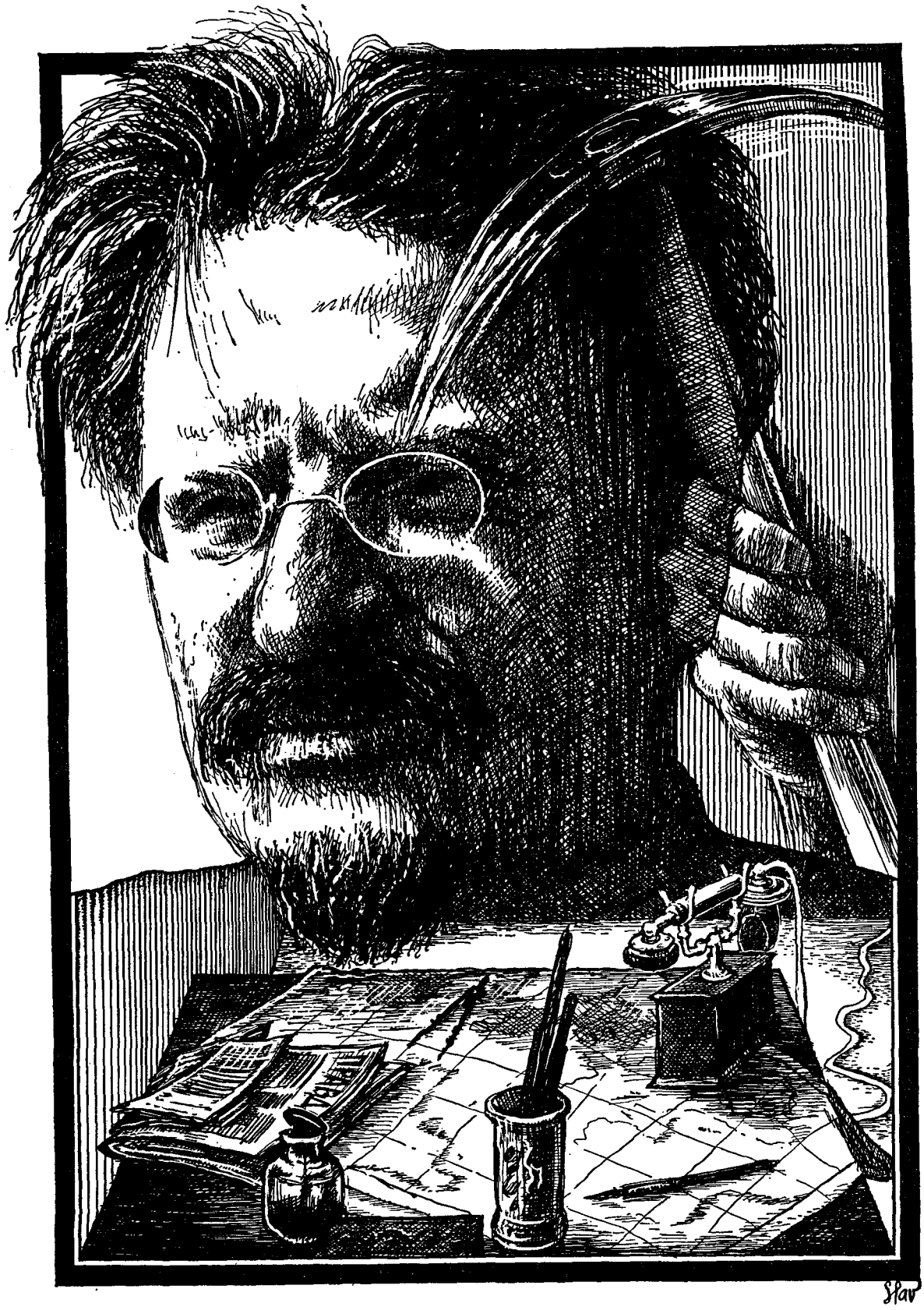

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Trotsky's Agony

By Joel Carmichael

I HAVE BEEN WRITING a life of Leon Trotsky, and when it comes to be mentioned, eyebrows are freely raised. A new biography of Trotsky—how strange! Perhaps it is. Substantially eclipsed by the passage of a generation, Trotsky's name has shrunk—or perhaps swollen—into another of the many symbols now bewitching so many. Shouted down as a system by the clamour of the New Left and others, or shrugged aside as "irrelevant", like all the other systems of philistine oldsters, Marxism has retained its potency only through modish catchphrases and the glamour of its pantheon of heroes. In the far-flung debris of Marxism Trotsky's name has become, very nearly, an equivalent of Che Guevara's—an emblem of revolutionary purity.

Very strange indeed! Trotsky was, after all, the very incarnation of "classical Marxism", which, whether taken seriously or not, constituted a huge edifice of erudition, analysis, and reflection. How he would have suffered stripped down to the dimensions of a slogan bellowed by a naive mob!

Yet in writing his life I found it was just this seamless identification of Trotsky's with Marxism that made the quest for his personality elusive. He exerted a powerful tug over the imaginations of innumerable intellectuals—power = brains + action: he was practically the only professional Marxist whose writings found a mass audience. Nevertheless his idiom, though it illustrated many aspects of his character—wit, intelligence, vigour, style—served to veil it wellnigh completely.

TO ME Trotsky's life seems interesting precisely to the degree that it can be disentangled from his ideas, from his style, from his brilliance. After all, the timeless abstractions of Marxist prose—its "logic", its all-knowingness—have become more or less banal. To those outside their spell they give pleasure only in the occasional burst of comedy when one cocksure prediction misses its mark more flagrantly than usual.

Yet though it is difficult to excavate the living Trotsky, a man of singular gifts, from the dense medium of his major works, from the "dialectical" discussion of his career, it is possible. It seemed to me of immense interest to discern the play of character beyond the complexities and ambiguities that only a considerable intellect can sustain.

The Shy Revolutionary

TROTSKY BECAME world-famous in 1917, as co-founder of the successful Bolshevik *putsch*. Then, during the 1920s, he was ousted from the Bolshevik Party in a "struggle for power." Yet though Trotsky himself constantly refers to this "struggle", what was most remarkable about it was surely its non-existence. I think it is *the absence of any struggle* in the "struggle for power" that gives us a fundamental clue to his character.

What happened was far simpler. As General Secretary—the head of administration—Stalin had Trotsky removed from one position after another, in a series of piecemeal dislodgements, culminating in Trotsky's exile first to Siberia, then abroad, where he eventually had him murdered. The major segment of this process—the obliteration of Trotsky's position within the Party—took only a few years. Throughout it Trotsky, while remaining a celebrity, was confined, as far as his political activities were concerned, to debates within the tiny circle of the topmost Party institution, whom he proved incapable of influencing.

He seemed unable to react effectively to a quite fundamental phenomenon—the total transformation of the Bolshevik Party into an actual

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government under the control of the General Secretary. It is just this—the aggrandisement of the administrative centre—that should have been, one might have thought, plain as a pikestaff to any sensible observer, not to say participant. To a Marxist it might have been thought to be elementary.

After all, it is a Marxist cliché to maintain that the material base determines the spiritual superstructure. If this is put very broadly it is also, of course, mere commonsense. Consequently, once the Bolshevik Party, a coterie of intellectuals, agitators, and conspirators, took power and were transformed *en route* into a corps of administrators, it was surely foreordained that the man in control of the administrative apparatus would be correspondingly magnified. Long before Lenin's death, in short, it might have seemed obvious that, as General Secretary, Stalin was bound to grow in stature, as his office began to encompass not merely the transactions of the Party but all national life.

How is it that nothing of the sort was adequately foreseen? For years Stalin was looked down on as a mere "practical": he lacked a primary quality for a Marxist intellectual—articulateness. He was not adept at thrust-and-parry, at verbal felicity; he could not speak or write attractively; he was not "brilliant." Thus, in the traditional Party—the coterie of thinkers or mock-thinkers—it was only natural for Stalin to be sneered at while the eagles of the movement soared aloft.

THIS HANGOVER FROM THE PAST naturally took time to die. At the very beginning of the process that whirled him aloft so rapidly Stalin, too, might have shared this over-estimation of "ideas"; he too might have under-estimated at first the power of his apparatus and might have thought, before Trotsky's helplessness became manifest, that the most intellectual, the most learned, the cleverest spirit in the Party, with outstanding personal abilities to boot, would surely be a formidable opponent. To Stalin, too, Trotsky's oratory, his literary ability, his personal brilliance, his charisma for the masses, might well have seemed tremendous assets in an intra-Party conflict. Stalin, too, might have believed in The Masses; he too had dabbled in theory.

Nevertheless, even though this traditional reverence for ideas blurred for a time the perception of the paramountcy of the Apparatus—ultimately, of course, "ideas", thoroughly calcified, were incorporated by the Apparatus as part of the State Cult—there was never at any time what could be termed a "struggle."

It was natural for all elements in the Party to talk as though everything were being decided through the working-out of intellectual relationships. The difference was that when Stalin and his group did so it was no more than institutional hypocrisy, whereas Trotsky did so in the grip of an illusion that merely camouflaged his organisational helplessness. Thus, with quite different motivations, all disputants within the Party would cheerfully explain questions about the "struggle for power" exclusively in terms of ideas. Psychologically what is interesting in Trotsky's case is just this conception of his, his way of formulating the struggle he thought he was waging.

IT IS PLAIN, both from Trotsky's account of all this and from an examination of the events, that the source of Trotsky's difficulties was fundamental: he had no factional support. Before 1917 he was famous for his inability to form a closely knit group around himself; afterwards he remained equally isolated. Handsome, dandified, magnetic, with a lordly manner—for that matter towering physically over most of the Bolsheviks, most of whom, especially Lenin and Stalin, were on the dwarf-like side—Trotsky could collect an entourage (primarily, of adoring women). In simple language he was incapable of communicating with his peers, incapable of the face-to-face rapport between equals, and incapable of imposing himself on inferiors in such a way as to involve their allegiance. Trotsky, in fact, was shy.

This authoritative exponent of ideas, this thunderer among the Masses, this altogether commanding personality, was at heart diffident. It was shyness that inhibited him from presenting himself to the public, even the Party public, under his own name, and shyness, with its concomitant aloofness, that made it impossible for him to create a faction. This inability of his in personal relations was, of course, the reverse side of his public virtuosity, his gift for communicating with anonymous masses through his oratory and his pen. As the exponent of ideas, almost their mystical incarnator, he could hurl his powerful voice against the multitudes; in talking to individuals he merely conveyed the impression of an overwhelmingly powerful ego, of vanity, of "haughtiness."

For why, after all, must a powerful ego *look* so very powerful? Did not Lenin, whose inner composure made him absolutely unyielding on all points of principle, nevertheless convey at the same time a perfectly genuine impression of personal modesty, affability, homeliness, *charm*? When a fool spoke to Trotsky he soon realised what a fool he was; when a fool spoke to Lenin

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he came away thinking that Lenin was not haughty at all, but was simply delighted to be of help: it made him long to accept Lenin's authority.

On its positive side this congenital shyness of Trotsky's either entailed or paralleled the sort of philosophical idealism characteristic of so many Marxists, a hyper-rationalism that made Trotsky fall back, unconsciously, on the omnipotence of ideas precisely at moments when he felt incapable of taking personal action. The question has too often been avoided: why did Trotsky not, in fact, *struggle*? Were not his ideas at stake? Everything, really, that he "stood for"? His very person?

His own explanation of his defeat reflects, of course, a general Marxist attitude—"historic forces" are all-powerful; personal struggle is meaningful only if associated with an historical current that is in the ascendency. Events are, indeed, determined by a fatality that only Marxists, armed with their Great Key, are able to perceive and thus to exploit. It is a knotty point for historical materialism, to be traced back to a formulation made by Marx in his mid-twenties, when he said the transition to Socialism was inevitable while at the same time a revolution had to be made to ensure it. This celebrated formula contains, of course, a troublesome contradiction, noted by many. If a revolution—with its inevitable *putschist* element—must be made, the transition to Socialism is *not* inevitable; if the transition is inevitable, the revolution is superfluous.

Historically, of course, this merely logical contradiction was resolved in fact, as it were, by the quiescence of the mass Social-Democrat parties of the Continent, with the underground Russian Mensheviks reflecting the same attitude. All were waiting comfortably for the historic forces divined by their great dialectical key to sweep society and themselves into a new situation.

Lenin's personal contribution was to accept the indispensability of the *putschist* element and to seize his opportunity. Since a *putsch*, too, was implied in Marx's youthful formulation, it was quite easy to claim his sanction, especially, of course, after the *putsch* was successful! It was still easier for the rapidly expanding governmental aparatus later on, with its control of all media and with armies of tame intellectuals, to claim that no matter what it did it was the purest Marxism.

IN CRITICAL MOMENTS Trotsky was to find himself obliged to replace activity with theoretical explanations.

Temperamentally he had always been completely sympathetic to this "voluntaristic" (or *putschist*) element in Marxism; as a theoretician, indeed, he had created an intellectual device (in his notion of "Permanent Revolution") that justified the assumption of power by the Revolutionary Party—representing, naturally, the Proletariat—even in a backward country like Russia.

There is a curious account of a conversation he had in prison, after the 1905 events, with Ziv, a friend of his youth.[1] Trotsky had always been on friendly terms with the Mensheviks, though not a member of their fraction. His aversion to Lenin had also kept him out of the tight little group around Lenin, who in payment for Trotsky's denunciation of him as a "repulsive shyster" etc. referred to him in a variety of phrases like "hollow bell . . . revolutionary balalaika . . . phrasemonger . . . " etc., all more or less the Russian equivalents of "chatterbox." In prison Trotsky made it clear that questions of action, especially of personal action, far transcended mere theory, though theory was, no doubt, a vital necessity. It was plain to Ziv, in fact, that though Trotsky was a "Bolshevik by nature" he had become a "Menshevik by necessity." He said as much to Trotsky:

> How can you, as a Marxist, not see that it is precisely the Mensheviks who are the real Marxists, and that the Bolsheviks are totally alien to Marxist thought?

Constrained by his theoretical links to the Mensheviks, Trotsky had to agree with Ziv that Lenin was absolutely no Marxist, but on the other hand, that the Mensheviks were quite incapable of any dynamic political action, in contrast with the Bolsheviks, whose tactics were always "healthy."

> In his words [Ziv wrote]
> there was a clear echo of the ardent sympathy he had for the Bolsheviks, who were close to him in spirit, and of his ill-concealed antipathy for the Mensheviks, who were thoroughly alien to him.

Ziv then asked young Trotsky:

> How do you explain the strange circumstance that a correct Marxist tactic can be carried out only by those who are plainly not Marxists, while the Marxists are completely incapable of Marxist tactics?

A difficult question, and it would be rewarding, no doubt, to have Trotsky's reply: alas, the conversation was interrupted by a gaoler.

Even in this youthful exchange we can see Trotsky's impetuous temperament chafing at the constraints of "logic." Later on, whenever he had to explain a particular situation, he was often to abandon the theory of the primacy of

[1] Dr G. A. Ziv, *Trotskii: Kharakteristika po lichnym Vospomina niyam*, New York 1921, p. 53.

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"historical forces" in favour of an emphasis on personalities. I shall indicate in a moment the degree to which his common sense and honesty obliged him to depart completely from Marxist determinism in assessing Lenin's role, while at the same time instantly reinstating these same "forces" whenever he discusses his own behaviour. Thus, even though his preference for Bolshevik "dynamism" over Menshevik "passivity" should presumably have fitted him for an active struggle even in isolation, his explanation of his own conduct is always envisaged as a by-product of a mechanical determinism. Whenever he discusses his own failures his strong personality seems to fade away as his "forces" come charging in.

In referring, for instance, to the question so often put to him after his eclipse—"How could you have lost power?"—he remarks: "In most cases the question covers a naive conception of letting some material object slip from one's hands"—like "losing a watch." He follows this with a characteristic Marxist explanation ("social forces," etc.) that, while undeniable to the point of banality, is plainly irrelevant to the specific situation. The potent metaphors sprinkled round his *History of the Russian Revolution* are all forgotten—the "power . . . lying around in the streets," waiting "for someone to pick it up": the "power" that was "so hot you had to have something to hold it with. . . ." When the Bolsheviks had demonstrated their high spirits by "picking up" the power "lying about the streets" they, unlike the Mensheviks, had obviously refused to wait for the play of "social forces".

Here Trotsky's attitude toward Lenin's indispensability is important. In his autobiography Trotsky makes much of his certainty that Lenin *alone* was capable of forestalling Stalin's emergence (also a result, after all, of the inevitable formation of an administrative apparatus, surely an "historic force"). By the time Trotsky was reduced to writing the story of his life Lenin had become so overwhelming a figure as to have been able to nullify even this massive social phenomenon. This contrasts sharply with Trotsky's apologies, throughout his copious writings, about the "struggle for power". *There* the motif is consistently in the passive mood—what *they* did to *him!*

Yet if his admission, wrung from his Marxism by his honesty, was correct—that Lenin had been "indispensable" at least twice (in engineering the Bolshevik coup and in being potentially able to forestall Stalinism), surely it must mean that Trotsky too might have brought about a different historical outcome by *personal action.*

Why, then, *was* he passive? We seem to be at the heart of his shyness, unmistakably indicated, to my mind, in the following passage from his autobiography. His answer to the question "Why didn't *you* do something?" displays with a technical precision the conditions that made his passivity inevitable in the circumstances: his personal qualities both of diffidence and of a peculiarly theatrical hypersensitivity to *appearances.*

> Independent action on my part would have been interpreted, or, to be more exact, represented, as my personal fight for Lenin's place in the party and the state. The very thought of this made me shudder. I considered that it would have brought such a demoralisation in our ranks that we would have had to pay too painful a price for it even in case of victory. In all plans and calculations, there remained the positive element of uncertainty—Lenin and his physical condition. Would he be able to state his own views? Would he still have time? Would the party understand that it was a case of a fight by Lenin and Trotsky for the future of the revolution, and not a fight by Trotsky for the place held by Lenin, who was ill? Because of Lenin's exceptional position in the party, the uncertainty of his personal condition became the uncertainty of the condition of the entire party. The indefinite situation was being prolonged. And the delay simply played into the hands of the epigones, since Stalin, as general secretary, became the majordomo of the apparatus for the entire period of the interregnum.[2]

This boils down to saying it was impossible to fight because people would think you were fighting! Combined with Trotsky's short comings as a factional intriguer, it really implied that no fight could even be *started,* that *only* "objective forces" could come to the rescue. Trotsky's very wording is revealing: his "independent action . . . would have been interpreted, or, to be more exact, represented. . . ."

THIS TAKES US to the very crux of his own attitude. His wording reveals that he thought of himself as a *public* peformer instead of a combatant *within* the Party. It implies his taking it for granted that he did not and could not have a faction. For if he had been capable of putting one together, it would not have seemed to him that the initiative for "representing" his attitude was bound to be in the hands of his enemies alone. His whole passivity in this matter arises out of the knowledge that he had no way of doing anything *but* claiming and demanding and proving his right to be Lenin's successor. With a faction, and with all the moves possible in the chess-game of factionalism, he would simply have been manoeuvring against the other factions—the epigones!—and done as well as he could. For that matter Stalin contrived to look unusually diffident in the very process of becoming an unprecedentedly powerful boss.

Thus, Trotsky's wording, with its tentativeness,

[2] Trotsky, *My Life,* ch. 39 (Lenin's Illness).

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its obsession with abstractions and generalities, compounded by his "self-love" (which doubtless made him peculiarly susceptible to a *charge* of vanity), entails precisely what we know in retrospect about his performance—this remarkably active man was, in such relations, remarkably passive. When this is juxtaposed to Trotsky's commonsensical awareness of the role of personality in crucial situations, it is plain that the shyness it illuminates is purely characterological —a long way indeed from "historic forces."

Hence his inability to form a faction was, as Marxists like to say, "no accident." It reflected traits of character he was no doubt reluctant to acknowledge even to himself: perhaps they were too intimate.

MAX EASTMAN HAS GIVEN us a graphic description of Trotsky's appearance at a party in the Kremlin in the early 1920s.

A merry, lusty, drinking, talking, singing party, it was in full swing when Trotsky, dressed in a natty white tunic, moved through the rooms with a smile pasted on his face like that of a "YMCA secretary." As he appeared, the din subsided; it started up again with greater vigour after he had passed by.

Here is Trotsky's own account of such parties:

> If I took no part in the pleasures that were becoming more and more customary in the new ruling stratum, it was not out of ethical principles, but because I did not want to expose myself to the torment of the worst tedium. Party-giving, industrious attendance at the ballet, joint drinking evenings with the inevitable gossip about those absent had no attraction for me. The new summit felt I was not adapted to their way of life. Nor was any attempt made to draw me in. It was because of this that whenever I appeared conversations of groups would stop and the people taking part in them would separate, with a little embarrassment *vis-à-vis* each other and with some hostility toward me. If one wishes to, one can say: this means I was beginning to lose power.[3]

Immediately following this he goes on to generalise it out of existence: more "social forces."

He once attended a New Year's Eve party at his brother-in-law's, for a purely political purpose. As Victor Serge records, he came back at once: "I can't stand it," he said: "drinks and gowns! Chatter. You'd think it was a salon. . . ."

His awareness of the importance of the personal factor—whenever it can insinuate itself past his Marxist guard—is illustrated when he is obliged to discuss Stalin, whom he came to regard as the monster of the epoch. Incapable of confronting the importance of the personal factor whenever it concerned himself, he also, for quite different reasons, refused to acknowledge it when it came to assessing the interaction between an individual and an historic process in the case of Stalin. The reader is bound to consider his view of Stalin more than a little inadequate:

> The epoch of the epigones is separated from that of Lenin not only by a gulf of ideas, but also by a sweeping overturn in the organisation of the party.
>
> Stalin has been the chief instrument in carrying out this overturn. He is gifted with practicality, a strong will, and persistence in carrying out his aims. His political horizon is restricted, his theoretical equipment primitive. His work of compilation, *The Foundations of Leninism,* in which he made an attempt to pay tribute to the theoretical traditions of the party, is full of a young student's errors. His ignorance of foreign languages compels him to follow the political life of other countries at second-hand. His mind is stubbornly empirical, and devoid of creative imagination. To the leading group of the party (in the wider circles he was not known at all) he always seemed a man destined to play second and third fiddle. And the fact that today he is playing first is not so much a summing-up of the man as it is of this transitional period of political backsliding in the country. Helvetius said it long ago: "Every period has its great men, and if these are lacking, it invents them." Stalinism is above all else the automatic work of the impersonal apparatus on the decline of the revolution.

This assessment of Stalin primarily in terms of his intellectual dexterity sounds curiously provincial, even from the pen of one whose chief distinction was just such dexterity. It is certainly plain that "administration" calls for qualities, whatever they are, which are inevitably different from abstract thinking; but could Trotsky really have thought that Stalin had arrived at the apex of the apparatus "by accident?" That he did nothing to shape that apparatus? That he had been, in fact, as passive as Trotsky?

In discussing Zinoviev and Kamenev (Stalin's first allies against Trotsky) he points out that though they were both "probably superior to Stalin" in theoretical and political respects, "they both lacked that little thing called character." Then he says:

> "We must aim far ahead," I repeated dozens of times to Zinoviev and Kamenev . . . [neither one endowed with "that little thing called character"] . . . "we must prepare for a long and serious struggle."[4]

The very formulation of these words, with their apparent far-sightedness, and their being addressed to these two men, shows that Trotsky's idea of a "long and serious struggle" was to—wait. To wait for a change in the times. . . .

This was, curiously enough, what he had always called the "specific disease of the Men-

[3] Trotsky, *My Life,* ch. 41 (Lenin's Death).
[4] Trotsky, *My Life,* ch. 42 (The Last Period of the Struggle within the Party).

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sheviks"—a "madness for tact", the concept of "*après vous*, Gaston"— in other words being a "kibbitzer," an onlooker.

Trotsky was, in fact, the passive object of a long-range process in the society he had helped to establish. He simply proved alien to his historic surroundings.

Identity and Ambivalence

COULD HIS Jewishness have contributed to this alienation? There are some suggestive discrepancies in his autobiographical account, which generally is an honest and frank document, despite, to be sure, its blind spots.

Like many Jews who went into the Russian revolutionary movement, especially its Marxist branch, Trotsky thought it would be, on the whole, a good thing if the Jewish community simply vanished. He thought, indeed, that with the inevitable triumph of the Revolution, the Jews, by assisting in the great historic transformation, would pay their debt to History and gracefully bow off the stage, yielding to more modern "social forces." Thus, while there could be no question of evading his Jewishness altogether he had a sort of built-in motive for minimising it as much as possible.

Trotsky's first formal schooling was, of course, Jewish; indeed, parochially Jewish at that. It took place in a village—a *shtetl*—near the family farm, in a Jewish schoolroom in which the teacher, in return for "so many roubles and so many sacks of flour", was supposed to teach the children some elementary subjects, including the "Old Testament" (a quaintly Christian expression for such an orthodox schooling) in the "original Hebrew." In short, unmistakably a *cheder*, though Trotsky omits the unambiguous word. While attending this school he was supposed to be living in the *shtetl* with his Uncle Abraham and his Aunt Rachel.

Trotsky says he never made any friends at this elementary school because he "did not speak Yiddish", though it is plain that the language of the *shtetl*, too, was Yiddish, since that was the language of instruction in the *cheder*. Thus, while living for many months at the house of relatives in a community whose language was Yiddish, and attending a Yiddish-speaking elementary school—whose teacher he was, moreover, fond of—Trotsky says more or less flatly that he never learnt the language!

The oddity of this is underscored, furthermore, by his remarking that his parents spoke a "broken mixture of Russian and Ukrainian." Since Russians, after all, talk Russian and Ukrainians Ukrainian, this remark is curious: taken in conjunction with the whole background it seems to imply that their native idiom, at least when speaking to each other, was in fact some other language—no doubt Yiddish, too, like Uncle Abraham and Aunt Rachel.

Trotsky seems to make a point of minimising his parents' Jewish interests; yet they emerge irresistibly from his narrative. For instance, in the grip of his free-thinker's foible—in which only ideas are important—the adult Trotsky emphasises his father's atheism: when his father was much older he stopped "pretending to believe in God." Yet this very observation throws into relief the family's piety, since though his father was illiterate (unusual, for that milieu) and the family lived in the country away from any Jewish centre, they went to the trouble to travel miles to go to synagogue on all the high holidays. On the Sabbath, also, his mother would never sew in public. When one of her sons was seriously ill she refused to ride with him to the doctor on the Sabbath; a trustworthy Gentile had to take him to the doctor in the *shtetl*.

What is perhaps most curious of all, in view of the emphasis placed on his father's religious indifference, is an episode that took place when Trotsky was around 11 or 12, and living with some cousins in Odessa. Though these cousins were themselves completely indifferent to religion, Trotsky recalls that he started studying Hebrew *again*, with a "learned old man" (from whom he must have learnt a good deal since he studied with him for many months and was able to discuss a philosophical point on the basis of the Hebrew text). This certainly sounds odd: Trotsky says nothing further about it. He explains his father's insistence on Hebrew studies as due to his "parental ambition", and then drops the subject altogether.

The reader is bound to be baffled: if his father did not *even* believe in God why should he insist on his son's studying Hebrew at all? What could have been the goal of his "parental ambition?" Could the "learned old man" have been a—rabbi? Was young Trotsky studying, in fact, for his—*Bar Mitzvah*, the Jewish rite of initiation into adulthood?

Total silence. Yet Trotsky is usually so frank, if in his own way, that his glossing over the whole of this surely significant episode tells us something of his character.

When he was about 25 he was asked whether he was a Russian: "No!" "A Jew?" "No!" "Then what?" A proud retort—a "Social-Democrat!"

And once in power, when he was approached by a Jewish delegation, he said, in the same vein, that he was no Jew but an internationalist. A more "Jewish" response can hardly be imagined.

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Other internationalists can be French, German, Russian, etc., and will say so; only Jews are just *plain* internationalists!

Trotsky discusses this point about his origins explicitly, dismissing it as far as the "Party spheres" are concerned, and dealing with it, as it were, technically *vis-à-vis* the prejudices of the rabble. He reports that Lenin was actually indignant when Trotsky said his own Jewishness might be a drawback for a top position. Trotsky even leans over backwards a little: he tells an anecdote from the Civil War about some Cossack protesting that Trotsky was "no Jew at all, he was a fighter, one of us—*Lenin* was the Jew!"

Curiously enough, Lenin had a speech defect somewhat reminiscent of a Jewish accent in Russian; perhaps this added to the anecdote's plausibility, especially since Trotsky, who had long since soared beyond his own milieu, now had one of the finest Russian voices in the country.

When Trotsky records having his two sons (by his second wife, herself an Orthodox Catholic by birth) registered as Protestants during their stay in Vienna, a cosmopolis teeming with Catholics and Jews, in order to make their "burden" as light as possible, we are bound, I think, in the light of the ambivalences I have been suggesting, to regard it as significant.

The subsequent fate of the Jews under Nazism —even before the "final solution" of the extermination camps—elicited an emotional response: Trotsky gave it as his opinion that a "territorial" solution to the "Jewish problem" was indispensable (an idea he had always been strongly against), though he thought the Zionist choice of Palestine very dangerous.

It appears to me that a part, at least, of Trotsky's isolation might have been due to just this unavowed, indeed suppressed factor; allied with his aloofness, it may help explain his inability to create a personal faction and to appear in public under his own authority.

The Idea of Lenin

IT WAS NO DOUBT his temperamental remoteness—in such contrast with Lenin's free-and-easy manner—buttressed by this nagging malaise about his exotic origins, that also explains his reliance on the philosophical idealism inherent in Marxism: the conviction, despite the apparent use of material data, that only Ideas really count. Trotsky's personal shortcomings, an inner apathy and his psychic languor in relations of human conflict, may have reinforced this obsession with Ideas, which came out most strikingly in his devotion to his two great spiritual mainstays—Lenin (or perhaps the Idea of Lenin) and the Bolshevik Party (or, again, the Idea of the Bolshevik Party).

There is certainly a striking contrast between the quasi-adulation freely expressed by Trotsky for Lenin after 1917 and his *de facto* relations with him in the previous years.

When Trotsky first made his way from Siberian exile to London to see Lenin in 1901, the latter was extremely sweet to him, though he had, to be sure an ulterior motive: he needed talented recruits. He was exceptionally affable to the young Trotsky—nine years his junior—and went out of his way to bring him to the fore. Yet curiously enough, despite Lenin's charm, despite, moreover, a substantial identity in their political attitudes, young Trotsky turned against him very soon afterwards (at the founding congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party in 1903) and from then on until 1917 spent much of his time savaging him with the ferocity characteristic of Marxist polemics, which even though clothed in timeless prose allowed ample room for the exchange of personalities—a "shyster," with a "hideous . . . dissolute . . . demagogical" style, "malicious and morally repulsive", *etc.*: these were only routine epithets.

It is plain from the evolution of Trotsky's ideas that, had he been *emotionally* disposed, he could just as well have supported Lenin's theories as not. But he had come too late. In the mini-universe of the Russian Marxists there was really no room for too many leaders. In the midst of consolidating his Bolsheviks as a tight, monolithic organisation run by the centre, Lenin was simply irresistible, unbeatable. For that matter, Trotsky was six years younger than Martov, leader of the Mensheviks; there could be no question of his emergence there either. Hence, in a movement that despite its diffuseness was being articulated *via* underground organisations. Trotsky remained for years a rootless virtuoso. During the height of the Russian Revolution, too, Trotsky arrived too late—a month after Lenin—and still without a faction!

TO BE SURE, the cardinal consequence of Trotsky's factional isolation in 1917 was veiled for a time by the marvellous suitability of the political background for Trotsky's gifts. As in 1905, so in 1917, Trotsky could deploy his virtuosity against a background that for the time being seemed independent of apparatuses: he could speak, write and think in a milieu that was essentially democratic. In point of fact, all Trotsky's gifts—intelligence, articulateness, and public aura—made him ideal for a democratic society. Or, at

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least, for the public side of democracy: behind the scenes, no doubt, there is the same jungle of wire-pulling, intrigue, and cut-and-thrust that undid Trotsky within the Bolshevik Party. There is a poignant echo of Trotsky's nostalgia for his true medium—democracy!—in the immediate wake of the October *putsch*, when Trotsky (now in power, as he thought) and Sukhanov (author of the principal memoir of the Russian revolution)[5] are reminiscing about the period, only just past, when normal "politics" were still effervescing in a public arena. Trotsky heaves a sigh: "What happy days those were! . . ."

In 1917 Trotsky was once again, from Lenin's point of view, a gifted recruit, a star whose virtuosity was unmortgaged by any organisational appendages. Trotsky capitulated completely; he had no organisation of his own with which to justify the "merger"; he rather pathetically tried to cover up his capitulation; he simply joined the Party, of course on a high level, for, after all, the Bolsheviks did not have so very many eagles. Thus did Trotsky come to his adulation of Lenin during the great events of 1917. Just this is the crux of the matter: *did* he adulate him or did he pretend to? Or, what is no doubt most likely, in view of Trotsky's basic incorruptibility, did he merely internalise his pretence of adulation in order to safeguard, unconsciously, his sincerity?

It is just this interior weakness of Trotsky's—his floundering, in fact, without a leader during the turmoil following the October *putsch*—that makes it difficult to ascertain the true motivation of Trotsky's curious diffidence *vis-à-vis* Lenin after 1917, all the more so since it is plain that Trotsky desperately *needed* some psychological support within the Party. His connection with the Party had been very recent: it lasted, in fact, only a few years in all, from some months before the Bolshevik *coup* in 1917 to the last phase of the Civil War in 1920. From then on he was on the decline.

LOOKED BACK AT in retrospect, indeed, he had been, essentially, a trouble-shooter, though some of his assignments were, to be sure, notable. First of all, he put the Bolsheviks in power. Without his talents, and without his position as Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet—an elective position and the principal camouflage for the Bolsheviks—the success of the October *putsch* against the democratically elected Constituent Assembly would have been dubious. Secondly, he saved them by creating the Red Army, practically from scratch, and played a decisive role in the Civil War and its aftermath by his reorganisation of rail transport. Afterwards, in Schiller's words. "The Moor had done his duty, the Moor could go. . . ."

His were remarkable services to the Party, but they could not be harped on too blatantly, at least by himself: they rather worked against him, in the sense that his abilities simply annoyed those Party comrades with whom he was out of harmony. He demonstrated his own awareness of his precarious position by strangely underemphasising all these contributions of his, both on the theoretical level ("Permanent Revolution") and on the practical (the technical execution of the *coup*), though he could not, of course, disclaim them. His writings in exile convey a note of pathos. It is obviously painful for him to have to remind the movement of all that he had done for it!

It was no doubt his isolation within the Party that obliged him to do something he was temperamentally predisposed to do anyhow—idealise his relationships with both Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. It was inevitable for him to glorify the Party as the exemplification of an Idea. It was only natural for him to emphasise his solidarity with the soon-ikonised leader, Lenin, and to quote, with touching pride, Lenin's commendation of him as "one of the finest Bolsheviks," as "a brilliant organiser", as "absolutely ALL RIGHT. . . ."

The trouble with this, unfortunately for him, was that it simply didn't work. It was only too easy for the Party veterans to probe the past and bring up against him the countless clashes with Lenin between 1903 and 1917, differences expressed in the rudest language. Trotsky was particularly vulnerable, indeed, since he was one of the most eloquent Russian Socialists, with a remarkably fertile pen and a lacerating wit. The veterans themselves (to say nothing of the parvenus) had seldom had any real disagreements with Lenin and for that matter had seldom expressed any personal opinions at all.

Thus, as the cult of Lenin congealed with such swiftness (with Trotsky's help), he found himself more or less automatically stigmatised as a lifelong opponent of Lenin's; that same machinery of the state he was criticising, in an argument in which he felt it vital to have Lenin's authority behind him, easily wrested Lenin's mummy away from him and put it to its own uses.

When it came to the struggle, *i.e.* when Trotsky found himself enmeshed in organisational life, he was simply a fish out of water. If one thinks of the gay life he led in Vienna for most of the decade before 1917, the happy-go-lucky bohemianism, the popular articles, the hobnobbing with distinguished ideologues and

[5] See the 2-volume Oxford University Press edition of N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1971* (Ed. and tr. Joel Carmichael, 1955).

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littérateurs at motley parties, and one contrasts this life with the mole-like labours of the Bolshevik and Menshevik professionals, actively tacking together little organisations that were later to prove decisive, it is plain that Trotsky's true *métier* was altogether different from his own *post facto* description of himself and from posterity's more general view.

The Pen and the Sword

IT IS NOT, OF COURSE, a question of ability, but of the direction of his interests. His debut as a revolutionary at the age of 17 was, after all, marked by an unusual capacity for precisely the organisational side of life (all the "underground" tasks of printing and distribution, of illegal publications, the establishment of secret networks, *etc.*); during his brief sojourn on the heights of power, also, he was a whirlwind of executive energy.

It was during his first exile, which he spent with his first wife in well-nigh idyllic circumstances—first love, seclusion, the life of the mind, a happy family life—that he seems to have embarked on a different course.

It is tempting to speculate on what turned him from a zealous "practical" into a glittering public performer. Perhaps the change in course was brought about by his talent for public speaking.

The scanty material extant on Trotsky's youth indicates that while his literary gift was precocious, he had no aptitude whatever for oratory. Yet during his exile he appears to have matured in this respect: at his very first appearance as a speaker in London he emerged absolutely full-blown—an orator with torrential gush, delivered in a coruscating, logical, brilliant style in a flexible, powerful, musical, and altogether overwhelming voice. Might this not have marked the transition from a merely intelligent, energetic adolescent, flinging himself into practical drudgery, to the brilliant artist whose virtuosity could enthrall multitudes?

Trotsky's almost total organisational lethargy, during the crucial decade before 1917, is certainly in sharp contrast with the activities of his potential colleagues and rivals. In his autobiography he admits this plainly, though perhaps a little lamely, when he says that his "work" between 1905 and 1917 "consisted very largely of interpreting . . . 1905 and breaking theoretical ground for the next revolution." It seems to me important to perceive without distortion what I think must be regarded as the major fact of Trotsky's life: he spent most of it surrounded by books and living by his pen. For that matter he generally earned his living by his contributions to the "bourgeois press" both before and after 1917 (except for the decade following the *putsch* when he was, so to speak, in government service). Trotsky characterises himself in his preface to his autobiography:

> A well-written book in which one can find new ideas and a good pen with which to communicate one's ideas to others, for me have always been and are today the most valuable products of culture. The desire for study has never left me; many times in my life I felt the revolution was interfering with my systematic work.

He comments more strikingly on his reaction to his immediate tasks the morning after the *putsch:*

> The conquest of power brought up the question of my government work. Strangely enough, I had never even given a thought to it; in spite of the experience of 1905, there was never an occasion when I connected the question of my future with that of power. From my youth, on, or to be more precise, from my childhood on, I had dreamed of being a writer.
>
> Times without number, I wrote and spoke about the programme of the revolutionary government, but the question of my personal work after the conquest never entered my mind. And so it caught me unawares.
>
> After the seizure of power, I tried to stay out of the government, and offered to undertake the direction of the press. It is quite possible that the nervous reaction after the victory had something to do with that; the months that had preceded it had been too closely tied up with the preparatory work for the revolution. Every fibre of my entire being was strained to its limit. The twenty-fifth of October brought the let-down. I felt like a surgeon who has finished a difficult and dangerous operation—I must wash my hands, take off my apron, and rest.

This is manifestly sincere, if only because of its contrast with his own self-image as a dynamic revolutionary. Perhaps it accounts for his curiously lethargic behaviour while being crushed, his remoteness from the authentic elements of authority, and his enduring obsession with the power of ideas.

If the gag of "Party discipline" had effectively muffled Trotsky, if he had simply shut up and toed the line, then, conceivably, he might have dropped back into political obscurity, as a mere journalistic pundit. He was in any case producing a torrent of comment on everything under the sun—literature, science, culture in general. His training as a journalist, allied to his status as a leading celebrity, put him in a position that must, in fact, be the dream of countless ideologues—a total outlet for total output.

But he was not, after all, a *mere* pundit. How could this supremely articulate, powerfully opinionated man shut up? More particularly, how could he shut up about politics? He *had* to talk! And even if he could have restricted himself

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to his endless stream of commentary on literature and art, that too would swiftly have come under the control of the Party,[6] since by the mid-1920s the "general line" encompassed quite literally everything in the country, a blanket submersion of life brutally consolidated only a few years later by an equally all-inclusive terror. There would thus have been no way out for Trotsky even if, improbably, one could imagine him becoming a routine hack.

IT WAS THIS CONSTANT STREAM OF TALK that kept getting him into trouble and finally deposited him tidily within the trap set, with such ease, by Stalin.

Since Trotsky attempted, more or less conscientiously, to conform with "Party discipline," the only way he could speak up was by implication, in metaphor and allusion. Thus, in his *Lessons of October* (a collection of articles preceded by an introduction) he pointed out, very diffidently, considering the circumstances, that his role in the 1917 *putsch*—it was, by now, of course, the "Great Revolution"—had been rather more than the official mythology admitted. In other words, the official mythology—the spiritual underpinning of the whole régime—was a lie. But this suggestion, broadcast for public consumption, could not conceivably have had any effect but that of infuriating his opponents: it was simply an appeal to a broad and undifferentiated public, an abstract communication. Most people would scarcely have known just what his point was; the insiders were merely enraged. It was one more manifestation of his primordial incapacity for factional struggle—a need to speak in abstraction to masses unstructured by administration.

In a sense, of course, this is all to his credit as a human being: upright, honourable, frank. But he was frozen in a heroic pose. The suspicion is unavoidable that his heroism was a noble reflection of a sort of defect, an aversion to the earthy, smelly, tug-of-war of organisation, and an inability to cope with his fellows on equal terms.

He was a sitting duck. The erosion of his reputation began with the embitterment of the factional intrigue after the Civil War and became rapid after Lenin's death; only a few years later he was a political corpse. Throughout the process he was inert: for he was temperamentally incapable of understanding what had become the medium of life in the Bolshevik Party: old-fashioned intrigue (now, because of the life-and-death issues involved, a life-and-death matter). Trotsky's total incomprehension of intrigue at the very moment it was being spun can be illustrated by his behaviour on the eve of Lenin's death, when, already being set up for the final punch by Stalin even before Lenin had breathed his last, Trotsky, in the grip of his mysteriously debilitating illness, took off for the Caucasus. *En route* he was cabled that Lenin had died (whereupon he fell into a coma for two hours).

The immediate question was, of course, whether he should go back to Moscow for the funeral. As if there could be any question about it! It would be the most formidable ceremony since the October days. . . . Getting the Kremlin on a direct telephone wire to inquire about this, he was informed that the funeral was going to take place before he could possibly get back; he was advised to relax in the sunshine. In point of fact, there would have been plenty of time to get back, since the funeral was not held for several days.

What is endearing about Trotsky's own account of this, given years later (in 1929), is the matter-of-fact way he reports the source of his information—Stalin! And he adds:

> Incredible as it may appear, I was even deceived about the date of the funeral. The conspirators surmised correctly that I would never think of verifying it.

It should be recalled that this was the culmination of a year of utterly soul-destroying dissension that had already reduced him to what was then his characteristic state, a combination of high tension and lethargy (which was why, indeed, he was on his way to the Caucasus).

It is plain that it was vital for him to get back to the centre, funeral or no. Yet even afterwards he lingered in the Caucasus until the springtime, listless and feverish. As even his adolescent elder son pointed out to him, his absence was bound to be exploited by his enemies (already denouncing him as a "petty-bourgeois deviationist") to destroy his public celebrity as well as his position within the Party.

WE HAVE NO REAL DATA on the torments undergone by Trotsky; it would be presumptuous to "psychologise" him speculatively. Still, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that there was something psychogenic about his protracted, intermittent incapacitation at moments of crisis, especially since he refers to it himself as a con-

[6] See, especially, the document by Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, published recently in *Survey* (Summer 1969) in which she outlines a programme for the purging of undesirable books from Russia's libraries, *e.g.*, the obsolescent "idealist" literature of Descartes, Spencer, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Plato, William James, as well as Nicolai Badyaev and Immanuel Kant. Cf. also: Bertram D. Wolfe's study of Lenin and Gorky, The Bridge & the Abyss (1970).

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stant accompaniment to emotional upheavals.

Nor can it be regarded as "accidental" that he kept slipping off to the Caucasus, where he spent many, many months during the whole period of his rapid, piecemeal exclusion from the Party. Trotsky and others gloss over this vacationing in the Caucasus with a vague medical explanation. Yet it is plain that he could relax only in the Caucasus. There nothing was known at large about the frictions in the tight little Party summit; for the provincial public Trotsky was still the most eminent member of the government. In the Caucasus his picture hung everywhere. There he was still adulated, while in Moscow his political life-blood was pouring from every wound.

(A concluding article will be published next month.)

Switzerland

In a valley in Switzerland a brass band marches.
The dapper chalets twinkle in the sun
Among the meadows and the well-drilled larches
And watercourses where streams briskly run.

Bravely the little drums pretend their thunder
To far-off crags whose melting snow brings down
A rattle of small pebbles buried under
Drifts deeper than the church spire in the town.

The soldier-citizens of the canton practise
Before an audience of sheep and cows.
As for the real thing, the simple fact is
Each keeps a well-oiled rifle in his house.

Duchies and principalities have fathered
These drums and cornets under angrier skies,
Bucolic bellicosities which gathered
The Ruritanian airs of paradise

Into a clockwork joke envious Europe
Could laugh at, play in, patronise, ignore,
As, poised between the saddle and the stirrup,
The Switzer was acknowledged as a bore.

The peaceable kingdom rests on marks and dollars
Beside the lake at Zurich, lined with banks,
Far from the towns draped with insurgent colours
Whose dawn breaks with the grinding tread of tanks.

The Alpine avalanche holds back this summer
Its fragile tons, and watches from the height
The nimble piper and the strutting drummer
Putting the valley's herbivores to flight.

Anthony Thwaite

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Bella Akhmadulina

from Rain

My host's invitation was something of
an undeserved honour. However, I
appeared, dripping water like a beaver,
and rang his bell at six o'clock precisely.

The Rain was hiding somewhere at my back.
Tickling as it sadly breathed down my neck.

Steps. Peephole. Pause. A lock turns.
I began to apologise: I've brought this Rain.

Do you think perhaps it could wait outside in the porch?
since it's much too wet, and too long anyway
to get into a room?
—What? said my astonished
host, and went white in the face.

★

To put it mildly, the mistress of that house would
never have bothered to hide her dislike of me,
except for the fear of being thought old-fashioned.
That restrained her, which was perhaps a pity.

—How *are* you? (And how could
so haughty a slender throat hold back the thunder?)
—Thank you, I answered hastily: I feel
like a sow that's been wallowing in the mud.

(I don't know what came over me. I meant
to say, with some polite
gesture:
—Things are rather busy, but I'm fine
And much better for seeing you again.)

But she began to speak at once:
You know, it's a disgrace, for someone like you, with so much talent
to walk so far. In all this rain!
Then everyone started to shout together.
—Bring her up to the fire! To the fire with her!

And once upon a time in another age
it could have happened to a beating drum
in the market place, with music perhaps and jeers
you would have cried:
To the fire with her, to the fire!

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Hello then, and leap up at me, Fire!
Brother, dog of many tongues, now lick
my hands in your great tenderness.
For you are the Rain also. Your burn is wet!

—Your monologue is rather peculiar,
my host said tartly.
—But never mind, blessings on green shoots!
There's always charm in a new generation.

—Don't listen to me, I'm delirious, I said.
It's all the fault of the Rain. All day it's
been pursuing me everywhere, like a devil.
It's only the Rain that's getting me into trouble.

Then, suddenly, through the window I saw
my faithful Rain, sitting alone and crying.
And two tears swam into my eyes, and they
were the last traces of water left in me.

translated by Elaine Feinstein

News item

Francis Golffing

"It was the worst fire this city has known"

"When the flames had swept through floor after floor of the building
They finally reached our great critic studying Fielding

"Rather put out, he flung what seemed the handiest book at
The flames and then, more civilly, added: 'Look it . . .'

"But the flames, with an incivility characteristic of cities,
Gobbled up *Tom Jones* and set aside his entreaties.

"Burnt to a crisp, our friend ('Mr Quiet' to his admirers)
Must now face TV crews and the screech of ambulance tyres

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NOTES & TOPICS

Crowther & the Great Issues

By Donald Tyerman

SPENDER SAID that the most impressive thing about Auden at Oxford was "that, at such an early age, he was so confident and conscious a master of his situation." Spender's journalist uncle said that Auden was "a remarkably self-possessed young man." Contemporaries of Geoffrey Crowther at Cambridge said the same of him. Crowther and Auden were different young men in different contexts. Crowther's "self-awareness and self-confidence" were not so much asserted as taken for granted. But men who did well enough in life after Cambridge were in despair when they saw how sure it seemed that he would succeed in whatever he chose to do. He chose, of course, journalism or, rather, as he always insisted, the special sort of journalism that was *The Economist*. When I first met him there, 35 years ago, there were others of "self-awareness and self-confidence" working with him under Walter Layton, individuals and intellectuals in their own right, like Graham Hutton and Douglas Jay. But there was no real doubt about who was "master of the situation." The long head was on Crowther's thirty-year-old shoulders. He knew where he stood and what he stood for.

> I became editor [he wrote in his valedictory article 17½ years later] on the night of Munich, and my introduction to the duties of the office was to sit up the whole of that night, re-writing my leader over and over again as the reports came in. (*The Economist*, 7 April 1956)

The dissection of the Munich agreement that night and afterwards in *The Economist* shows already the Crowther method . . . the precise and lucid exposition; the fairness of argument; the firmness of verdict. An official apology for Munich was that, calamity though it was for the Czechs, it protected what was left to them—people, places, and boundaries, better than the Godesberg ultimatum would have done. The judgment at the end of Crowther's scrutiny was not so: the Czechs had been left to the Nazis' mercy. Seven years later, when the Potsdam agreement brought its revenges, *The Economist* was no more equivocal:

> At the end of a mighty war fought to defeat Hitlerism, the Allies are making a Hitlerian peace.

Crowther's test of a workable peace was quite simple and characteristic: it was one which in, say, fifteen years' time the Germans would accept and the Allies would still be ready to stand by. What was apparently agreed at Potsdam, by the unholy alliance of Russians and Americans, was "the deindustrialisation and pastoralisation" of Germany, which would not be accepted and could not be enforced.

> We may not be able to alter what happens in the Russian zone, but we can at least disclaim responsibility for it. And we can follow our own conviction in the West, where what is left of Germany can be given the prospect, in the fullness of time, of achieving liberty, equality and prosperity within a Western Europe that is conscious of its political and economic unity. (*The Economist*, 11 August 1945)

The prophetic condemnation of the Potsdam agreement and the vision of Western Europe were founded neither on "any sentimental softening towards Germany" nor on mere ideological resistance to Russian communism.

> It is based on the belief that the system proposed is in the fullest sense unworkable. . . . Its methods of reparations reinforce autarky in Russia and consummate the ruin not only of Germany, but of Europe.

Here indeed is the true Crowther, whose first principles came always from having his feet on the ground and his eye unclouded: "There is no other cure for the German sore on the body of Europe than to heal it." So it has been seen in the long march from Potsdam since 1945, though the Russians still do what they will. When he asked himself in 1956 what the largest change had been in foreign affairs during his editorship of *The Economist*, Crowther deliberately did not say the emergence of Soviet Russia as an aggressive great power.

> The problem for Britain has always been how to contain the potential master of the Continent, and the fact that he now speaks Russian, instead of German or French or Spanish, is not a fundamental change.

The decisive change was "the emergence of the United States as a full-time great power and its willingness to form and lead a grand alliance."

> It still seemed most unlikely, when the second war came to its end, that the United States would actually accept the obligations and commitments

LORD CROWTHER died on 5 February 1971. He was editor of The Economist *from 1938 to 1956, when he was succeeded by Donald Tyerman. He was author of the famous Crowther Report on Education "Fifteen to Eighteen", and his work on the Commission on the Constitution was interrupted by his death, which was doubtless hastened by the business crises involving his chairmanship of Trust Houses Forte Ltd.*

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of a permanent formal alliance. But the miracle happened (thanks to Stalin) and the transformation it has brought about in the diplomatic position is revolutionary.

It was never Crowther's view that the British relationship to the United States should be subservient, simply that it was essential. If this was unreservedly recognised, then its relationship if need be could be "blasphemously candid"—to borrow the phrasing of the present deputy editor of *The Economist*, Norman Macrae, who in significant ways echoes most truly Crowther's attitudes to the great issues of world affairs. Crowther told Cy Salzberger once that British relations with the United States ought to be as freely candid as Australian with Britain. Crowther, from his most confident Cambridge days, never laid down the law doctrinally. He was open to, indeed he moved himself by, argument. He was never, crudely, a cold warrior. But he was as sure in the days of Stalin (and afterwards), as he had been in the days of Hitler, that a country must know—and certainly that *The Economist* must know, and say—who its real friends and potential enemies were. "Liberty", he wrote in 1943 at the time of *The Economist's* centenary, "is the very touchstone of the great conflict of principle that has been raging in the world for much more than four years and will continue for many years after Hitler is a memory."

THIS WAS ONE TEST—know your friends and know your enemies—that Crowther most applied to his successors and their colleagues after he ceased to be editor and remained as deputy-chairman and then chairman of the board of directors. He did not interfere at all with the paper's policy, just as he had never been interfered with himself; but he made it plain that this test was the first of his great issues—whether it was a question of offending the Americans over Suez or weakening towards the Russians over Cuba. He greatly admired Dean Acheson who, after his evil mauling in the days of Senator Joe McCarthy, had to spend the rest of his career proving, so otiosely, that he was not "soft on the Commies."

Crowther always said himself that his instincts were reactionary and his reasons radical. He also used to say that the rule of effective journalism was "first simplify, then exaggerate." Clearly this is what he did when he described his own reactions. He had far too much balanced and business-like moderation in him (in Bagehot's sense of these words) to be really "reactionary". Certainly when he was a young editor he swore that he could never even vote Tory without his West Riding forbears turning in their graves. And there is no doubt that he was, in the first swathes of thought and policy he cut—in the fields of monetary and economic management, war finance, in the general social programme and constant campaign for the open door in education, in assault on poverty and inequalities of wealth, and on restriction, monopoly, and impediments to growth—really radical. But it is true that he always started with his feet on the ground that there was around him. It is true that he distrusted more than most things what he called "the intellectual fallacy."

> It is so fatally easy to imagine that a clear argument, with its evidence neatly marshalled and its conclusion impeccably based on the soundest logic, can by itself, and without further human intervention, decide the matter. Those who live by the pen are prone to imagine that all men seek their fulfilment on paper. But men are led by men: for every one who is swayed by intellectual conviction there are a thousand who are moved by fear or loyalty, by greed or pity, by love of self or love of party, or by emotions which escape still further from the scholar's categories. In any issue of public policy or of social organisation, the purely intellectual problems of deciding what should be done are as child's play beside the human problems of getting it accomplished. (*The Economist, 1843–1943*, Oxford University Press.)

WHEN CROWTHER TOLD ME that he was going to give up editing *The Economist* at the age of 49, I took it for granted that he would go on writing, whatever high tasks he took on in business. But he said flatly No—not a line without a deadline. And so it was, to all our loss (and his) except for the official reports that preserved his public name and added character-

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istically to the force of radical sense in education, on consumer credit and without doubt (though it is not finished) on the British Constitution. There were wise, terse lectures here and there, which were sometimes printed, and shrewd speeches in the House of Lords or on academic occasions. But the old fertile creative process—the pen, the sheet of paper, and the deadline—which produced that flood of "radical reasons" between the mid-'30s and the mid-'50s, in the best editorial prose of our time, was dismantled. The biggest of gaps in the 1960s was the absence of Crowther working out week by week on paper to his own satisfaction what to do about the balance of payments, exchange rates, wage inflation, industrial relations, investment and productivity, to say nothing of the problems of the wider world. As it was it is perhaps true to say that sometimes what he called his "reactionary instincts" did get freer rein because there was so little time now for the "radical reasons". He was, while he carried his heavy business burdens, switched off too often and for too long from the great issues. Never, though, was he disconnected.

Memory can be oddly fallible. One columnist wrote, when Crowther died, of his ceaseless campaign against the Attlee Government. Herbert Morrison knew better: when he used to say that "it wasn't a question of public versus private enterprise but of *enterprise*, whether it was private or public," he always conceded that the patent rights belonged to Crowther. *The Economist* was not a "propagandist organ" targeted on socialism, but what Crowther called a "journal with a definite policy," into which much that the Labour Government of 1945 was trying to do would have fitted. It was the irrelevant nationalisation of steel and the inflationary consequences of Dr Dalton's finance that caused Crowther's *Economist* to say (in the words of a memorable cartoon by Illingworth). "This is where we get off." "The song in the Chancellor's heart," Crowther wrote when Dr Dalton voiced his loud pleasure at the state of the economy, "is the wind on the nation's stomach." The great issue in home affairs was not anti-socialism, any more than it was anti-communism abroad. It was positive not negative; it was, both at home and abroad, what in his centenary article (written when he had been editor for just five years) Crowther simply called "liberty and the common interest."

> A century ago liberty and the general interest were both best served by escape from the control of a State whose policies were restrictive and unduly subservient to a sectional interest. Today the economic and social disasters that follow from—or at least are not prevented by—the absence of any purposive direction of economic affairs make some intervention by the State once more seem desirable, while the great improvement in social and administrative techniques makes the State's intervention less clumsy. *Laissez-faire* has been discovered to have certain disadvantages that Wilson [James Wilson, founder of *The Economist*] either ignored or rated too low. Chief of them are the irregularity and inequality of the society it breeds; and the community of the twentieth century has come to regard the abolition of inequality and insecurity as aims ranking equally with that abolition of poverty which seemed a hundred years ago to stand alone.

Crowther did sound a warning all those years ago: "But if events prove that restrictionism and monopoly are organically inseparable from Government intervention in the economic field then it will be the duty of *The Economist* to that extent to swing back to the purest individualism." But he did not fear this then. The "soundest course" in economic policy was "to secure a balance between uncontrolled individualism and the 'purposive directives' of the State." There was nothing in these aims and principles to attach *The Economist* to any party or detach it from any other. The test was what the parties did.

At *The Economist* Crowther was free. And when he said good-bye in 1956 he was in two minds about what had been achieved. By far the biggest change at home had been "the assumption by the State of responsibility for the condition of the national economy". Yet he went on, "the odd thing is that this responsibility has been accepted without the slightest proof that anyone knows how, in fact, it is to be discharged. Indeed, the evidence is that neither party has had, at best more than the most rudimentary control over the economic climate since the war."

That was sixteen years ago, but precisely because sixteen years have gone by the words are truer now than then, and they underline both Crowther's perception of the differences between appearance and reality in public policy and the loss that his withdrawal then from the caravan of policy-watchers has been ever since. He combined, uniquely in my experience, the practical grasp of theory and the theoretical grasp of practice. He was, on paper, really a social and economic design engineer, when so many are so wrongly called that. The definition and marriage of purpose and performance were his tests over all his field of political economy and the organisation of society. He was better than any man I have known at working these things out on paper starting with always sound premises but working them out to a clear conclusion as he went along. Indeed he was better at this, I believe, both creatively and critically, than he could be at anything else.

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THESE PARAGRAPHS which the Editor of ENCOUNTER asked me for do not, I fear, have the shape or the purpose that Geoffrey would certainly have demanded of any contributor. They do not add up to a memoir. They leave out so much of Crowther's crowded career. They are no more than a commentary, an aside, by a fellow journalist on a journey we have in some part travelled together. And even so, Crowther the man is barely mentioned—the humour, the wit, the gaiety, the stimulus, the humanity, the impishness beside the authority, the childishness sometimes beside the eminence, the will to manipulate people, plans and events, the obsession now with this-or-that and then the leap to new pastures, the struggle to keep so many balls in the air without being too forgetful of some, the stamp always of style and mind, and some egotism, on whatever he said and did. To his real colleagues he was always a friend. Most of all, encompassing all else that he did, he was an educator. That is why he was a great writing journalist. That was the great issue that held him all his life, from school and Cambridge to the Crowther report and the Open University: the open door to education and "the human problem of getting it accomplished."

Thoughts on Our Time

By Nicola Chiaromonte

THE POLITICAL ABSOLUTE: "It is not laziness, ill-will or clumsiness that makes me fail in everything," Kafka wrote in his *Diary*, "but the lack of ground under my feet, the lack of air, the lack of law." And he went on: "My task is to create these things."

As far as literature was concerned, Kafka was no failure, as we know. But we know too (or we ought to know) that to a real writer—that is, a man who is not satisfied with make-believe—no literary success can make up for the lack of ground under his feet, the lack of air, the lack of law. For these things have nothing to do with everyday life, or with the virtues and vices, the ups and downs, of the individual: they are concerned with the relationship between conscience and the world, and, more simply, with the question of whether what one does and thinks day by day has or has not a meaning and a purpose. And we also know, or ought to know, that the ground under one's feet, "air" and "law," in the sense that Kafka meant them, that is, as the most basic fundamentals of life, are not things the individual can create for himself. They depend on all of us in general and on no one in particular, on the way things are at the time, on what has happened in the past and, in the final analysis, on no one knows quite what; certainly not on what—in an effort to know what it is, what its laws are, what point it has reached and where it is leading—is generally called History.

So when he decided to "create" these things himself, and to create them on his own, Kafka was being ingenuous, and was acting out of a reverential, squeamish sense of duty—a duty that was quite impossible and non-existent and that in any case, as all his work shows us, he himself failed to believe in. All he could do was suffer, because he lacked them; and his suffering of course contained—not so much implicit as incarnate in it—the longing for a different condition, for a state of stillness and peace. What he longed for was to cross the threshold of the door he put into one of his finest fables: in this, a stranger languishes outside the door until he is very old, thinking it barred to him; only to hear from its stony custodian that it has always been open, in fact, only to him.

IN 1929, A FEW YEARS AFTER Kafka's death and the publication of *The Castle*, the philosopher Edmund Husserl, a fellow-countryman of his and also of Jewish origin, began one of his most important works, *Formal Logic and Transcendental Logic*, with this passage:

> The present state of the sciences in Europe compels us to take a radical look at certain things. Basically, the sciences have lost the firm faith they once had in themselves and in their own absolute significance. Modern man today does not, as "modern" man did in the age of reason, see the objective use of reason, or the universal function long sought by humanity, in science and in the new

NICOLA CHIAROMONTE, *a regular contributor to these pages since the first number of* ENCOUNTER *in 1953, died in Rome, at the age of 66, on 18 January 1972. An appreciation of this distinguished European intellectual will be found on pp. 50-51.*

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> culture it has moulded; a function that would make a fully satisfying life possible, a life dictated by practical reason, on both the individual and the social level. This great belief—which took over from religious beliefs—that science leads to wisdom and self-knowledge, to a truly rational knowledge of the world and of God, and therefore to a life based upon happiness, satisfaction and well-being, a life that, though still subject to improvement, was truly worth living; this great belief has, among many people, lost its force. We live, therefore, in a world that has become incomprehensible, a world in which it is pointless to ask "what for?", a world in which we seek in vain for a meaning that was once indubitable, since both intellect and will acknowledged it.

Putting aside the rights and wrongs of this, it is clear that from two quite disparate points of view—Kafka's subjective viewpoint, and Husserl's objective one—two clear, calm observations have been made on the European "crisis of conscience." For the past fifty years at least we have been talking about it, and have not finished talking about it yet, for the very good reason that the crisis, far from being settled, has in fact grown deeper and more widespread. Husserl's entire philosophical research between 1899 and 1938 was an important and careful effort to confirm the value of truth in a culture undermined by relativism on two main points: one of them the idea that Truth might be a psychological matter, the other that it might be found in the realm of History and of historical action, or rather that it might be a child of its own time, and thus vary with the time.

Finally, in his remarks neither Kafka nor Husserl deals with politics; each is concerned with something that comes *before* politics, indeed with something that concerns thought, not action: the question of truth and the meaning of life.

NOW, WHAT HAS HAPPENED in the cultural field and in the life around it since the 1920s, and in particular since World War II, shows us two things: first, that individual action and behaviour have clearly been shaken by this question—either through doubt, or through the denial it seems to imply; secondly, that at the same time something you might call "relativist fanaticism" or "fanatical disbelief" has appeared alongside it. In other words doubt—and this seems to be not so much paradoxical as abnormal—takes the form of violent assertion. The doubt concerns the meaning of life; the fanaticism and the violence (which are intellectual before becoming physical) bear upon political action. Absolutes of any kind no longer exist, yet politics is an unshakeable absolute.

An obvious example of this paradox, or rather of this mental dissociation, is found in one of the most eminent *maîtres à penser* of our time, Jean-Paul Sartre. First in his philosophical works and then in his autobiography, he preached an integral atheistic morality of *glissement*, one that slipped freely from idea to idea and from action to action, without any considerations of continuity (which would somehow restore a transcendental God, a God that sat in judgment). However in his ideological and political works he appears wildly fanatical, brooking no criticism, setting himself up as a kind of one-man ultra-totalitarian party based on the proposition that "Marxism is the insuperable philosophy of our time": a remarkable proposition, as self-destructive as the jokey mechanical objects built by the sculptor Tinguely. Because if you make Marxism, which is in any case a way of thought, into a solid immovable object, into a wall or a threshold which (as in Kafka's fable) it is forbidden to cross, you are not just making it into the opposite of a philosophy, that is, into a dogma, but are taking away from it any of the value it may have. It is not Marxism that is thus idolised, but politics itself; political action, turned into a categorical imperative. Hence we are no longer talking about philosophy or politics, but about morality: a man is no longer moral unless he follows a line of political action that can be labelled "Marxist," that is, anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialistic, and so on.

The result may be nonsense, but it is still fanaticism; a relativist fanaticism, believed in, that is, so long as it is a matter of "challenging" the Enemy, real or imagined, yet with nothing to stand on, and not even efficacious. For it is not political thought; it is an extreme form of moralism, translated in its turn (not that Sartre goes so far: he is merely an example of a very widespread outlook) into a kind of totalitarian protest that says that if the Absolute is not realised, nothing can in point of fact be achieved.

Now it seems clear that any political action thus inspired is by its very nature unable to achieve the reform of society. It cannot even overthrow society, for in spite of appearances it has nothing in common with the revolutionary tradition it appeals to; on the contrary, it may provoke the organic, almost animal reaction that leads to the setting up of oppressive régimes. Whatever is new and liberating springs, not from dogma, but from the strength of reasonable doubt.

THE LOST MYTHS: In talking of our present state of crisis, we run the risk of sitting back smugly and, since there seems to be nothing we can do about it, waiting for the crisis to settle itself. In the origin of the word "crisis," very far back in its Indo-European root, there is the idea of "cut" and "wound"; but there is also the idea of

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"division," and in the form closer to that of the word we now use this becomes "to sieve," "to discern," and finally "to judge," "to decide."

Speculations about a new religion or plans for the perfect society may as well be left to those bizarre hide-aways of intellectuals known in America as "think tanks." But *our* task is to look around us, consider what is happening in our time, listen to what people are saying and speak out without fear or favour.

Now, in the talk we hear around us, and in everyday language, there is something far more striking than the familiar and false division between material and spiritual progress, or the completely false separation between the "two cultures," scientific and humanistic. This is the fact that we all, from the sophisticated intellectual to the ordinary reader of newspapers and magazines, keep using the language of progress —though we no longer believe in progress. We do not believe in it for the very good reason that it does not exist; what exists are the sensational achievements of scientific technology, biological or physical, the sensational exploits of surgeons or astronauts. But "progress" as Descartes conceived it, and as it was conceived in the years after him until the beginning of this century (to be precise, until 1914), is no longer credible for the simple reason that it no longer takes place.

Originally, it was seriously conceived to mean that scientific, intellectual, and moral progress were all going ahead on parallel lines and, as confidence in one of them grew, so it did in the others. Scientific and material progress was in fact conceived as the instrument of humanity's moral and intellectual progress (or at least of the progress of the Western world); and it was understood that through the West the whole of humanity would be lifted out of its age-old wretchedness and misery.

Instead of which (to put it simply), we have for some time past been pessimistic about what the morrow may bring; or if not pessimistic, uneasy; or if not uneasy, indifferent. In any case, not enthusiastic. Any enthusiasm there may be is verbal and spurious: we try, for instance, to persuade ourselves that going to the moon is a great victory for humanity, whereas it is clear that no one's happiness is going to be advanced a single iota by it.

AND IT WAS HAPPINESS, no less, that they were talking about in the 18th and 19th centuries: the real alleviation of human unhappiness. To spread the joy of human brotherhood about the world: this was the dream of which Mozart sang in *The Magic Flute*, and Beethoven in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony; not to mention Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and later the thinkers and apostles of Socialism.

"Le plus grand bonheur du plus grand nombre": this was the ideal of progress. And this is exactly what has collapsed now that increasing numbers of people, nations and whole continents, have discovered from experience that "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" in practice means only the greatest enslavement of the greatest number. This has to be: for in order to assure, not the happiness (no one, quite honestly, knows what that is, nor whether it can be considered an ideal) but at least the apparent well-being of the greatest number, obviously everyone has to serve the Cause and submit to the conditions necessary to achieve its object. In other words, this object concerns everyone, and if it is the single, supreme aim that man can conceive of, then it demands the submission of all. Society takes the place of God, as indeed Rousseau had envisaged. And the social contract means that each man becomes the slave of all, and all become the slaves of each man.

Clearly this is so in any type of social organisation that acknowledges the idea of progress as the supreme ideal. In this, there is precious little difference between Capitalist and Socialist régimes. As for the "consumer society" it is not even worth mentioning. The only question seems to be what other ideal or goal is proposed to the individual today, apart from the greatest possible satisfaction of his material demands and his sexual impulses.

But what has probably damaged our faith in progress even more has been the fact that the very people most ardently devoted to the cause of justice on earth and the reign of freedom instead of exploitation and slavery have rediscovered and reasserted the absolute right of the State. These are the revolutionaries, in particular the Bolsheviks, heirs of Saint-Just who first proposed *"cette idée de bonheur, si neuve en Europe"* as a political object that must be achieved at all costs —*i.e.*, no matter how many heads might roll on the way.

WHAT HAS BEEN the main outcome of two World Wars, and the threat of a third, as far as 20th-century political life is concerned? The restoration of the absolutist State, far more fearful than it was in monarchical times, since any step it takes can be justified in terms of technical expedience. Under such a form of government, traditional liberties become frills, superfluous luxuries to be abolished, as we all know perfectly well, as soon as any serious emergency comes along.

Now, it is in the struggle against State absolutism that democracy was born, and between

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State absolutism and the idea of progress there is a glaring contradiction, as there is between brute force and reason.

The truth of all this is perhaps that those of us living in the 20th century have, through all our wars and revolutions, touched the depths of social reality, that is, the destiny innate in the very fact of human society. Perhaps the truth is also that "happiness" cannot be the goal of the human community nor the purpose of civilised society. In democratic and socialist theory there is ambiguity about the connection between happiness and civilisation. What is the "alienation" we keep talking about but the sign and the effect of each man's subjection to the social imperative, to the ideal of *"bonheur"*?

INTELLECTUALS & POLITICS: Something quite unprecedented took place in Italy some time ago: an exchange of views on politics between a politician and an intellectual. In the columns of the Roman weekly *Espresso*, Ugo La Malfa and Alberto Moravia discussed the relative responsibility of "the Bourgeois-class" and of the Political class in the present highly unbalanced state of Italian society.

But there is *another* responsibility, belonging to *another* class. This seems a good opportunity to take a look at it: the responsibility of Intellectuals for the great confusion of ideas that reigns not only in Italy but all over Europe, and has reigned there for the past twenty years at least.

Nicola Chiaromonte

THE DAY WILL COME, *and not very long from now, when the figure of Nicola Chiaromonte will stand out as one of the best and greatest Italians of our time. This sort of prediction, uttered only a few days after his death, will strike some people as rash rather than generous, or, worse than rash, gratuitous. It might seem that clear judgment has been clouded by the suddenness of loss or by a long habit of affection.*

Other friends and acquaintances of Nicola Chiaromonte, even close and old ones, might perhaps react like one friend who remarked to me in this regard, "By 'figure', I suppose you mean the man as much as his thought, the character plus the work. . . . Now, Chiaromonte is one of those whose published work is very slight (two slender volumes in a lifetime), because their real work is their way of life. Chiaromonte expressed himself, in Socratic fashion, in his relations with others. That is a very rare and splendid way of behaving. But his memory will not long outlive the people who knew this wise man and learned from him."

The truth of the matter is that nine-tenths of what Chiaromonte wrote, scattered throughout European periodicals and American journals or simply in Italian manuscript, has never been collected in volume form, and some has never been printed at all. There are political writings, essays on art and philosophy, reasoned reflections, and simple letters to friends in at least three countries in languages that Chiaromonte handled with equal precision, a correspondence that was almost entirely one of profound commitment.

One reason that Chiaromonte published so few books was that he scorned writing as an activity that could be separated from life or considered apart from a fraternal rapport between real beings. When his writings are collected, in several volumes, it will be clear how intimately related they are to their author's journey through life—not to his private history but to what could be called the intimately public biography of a man who inhabited his time and thought about it always in the company of and for others. Until that day comes, however, one should underscore some of Chiaromonte's concerns and ideas.

WHAT HE CONSIDERED *the indispensable tie between human beings was friendship, in the sense of a solidarity of affection based on the true. He considered it essential not only to the life of the individual but also to civic life, in which this bond corresponds "to the sense of that reality which Aristotle termed 'philia'," the foundation of the social bond, the same reality which Leopardi called "the human company" and which Andrea Caffi liked to call by the name "society." It is appropriate that the name of Andrea Caffi (1887–1955) be mentioned. He was the man of whom Chiaromonte wrote: "To his friendship I owe the best influence that I may have acquired in the course of my life." And appropriate because Chiaromonte thought that the best form of knowledge and the highest sense of liberty are received directly from certain men and are transmitted directly to others.*

Andrea Caffi and Gaetano Salvemini were Chiaromonte's two "great friends," one in France, the other in America. Chiaromonte's friendship with these two men long inspired his thought and action. And friendship with the young, which he cultivated with open-hearted constancy, was one of the pivots of his life. The bravest and most unexpected tribute on Chiaromonte's death came from one of his political adversaries, a young Italian friend, a revolutionary of the most intransigent kind. Even Chiaromonte's physical life ended under the sign of friendship. It seemed impossible to find him a burial place in Rome. In the end he was interred in the tomb where a friend, Felice Balbo, had been buried years before.

FOR MANY YEARS *Chiaromonte devoted his greatest energies to* Tempo Presente, *an intellectual review, to the best of my knowledge, without precedent in Italy and, unfortunately, with no successor as yet. Many people have had occasion to remark that*

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We are not concerned, here, with the rather shocking fact that, after twenty years' experience of the stupid brutality of totalitarianism and official violence, most intellectuals, in Italy and France and elsewhere on the continent, in seeking to become involved in politics have found it quite normal to commit themselves to another form of totalitarianism—that of Communist ideology and practice. However mistaken this choice may be, it has complex motives which it would take too long to disentangle here. But what is worth considering (and it has the advantage of removing the discussion from the purely topical plane) is the mistake that lies hidden behind the very way in which intellectuals conceived, and mostly still seem to conceive, their relationship with politics and the responsibility this involves. This does not concern only Left-wing intellectuals; but since it is what is referred to as the Left that makes a particular point of questions of ideas, ideologies, and moral principles, it is natural to consider Left-wing intellectuals rather than others in any discussion on the relationship between ideas and politics.

TO PUT IT VERY SIMPLY, the intellectuals' mistake when they speak of politics is to pretend they are *politicians*. They use the language and attitudes of politicians when they talk about ideas and moral values. Now this is of no use to the mind or to morals or politics, for they subordinate intellectual and moral principles to political

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Tempo Presente *treated culture and criticism as universal matters without provincial restrictions, but the magazine had a still rarer and perhaps more important quality. Essays in our Italian magazines are almost always single, one might say fragmented, acts. Each contributor sings his own song—that is, he submits his article—and the only one who looks at the whole publication is the editor, he, too, an almost solitary individual. The only exceptions are party or strictly ideological periodicals, a useless exception because their unity is imposed from without. Chiaromonte tried to make* Tempo Presente *a "concert of ideas," that is, a spontaneously collective enterprise, not unlike what had been achieved years before in New York when, with Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, and other friends, he worked on the magazine* politics. *What impelled Chiaromonte in this attempt was his firm conviction that truth must be sought and found together with others.*

Chiaromonte's interest in the theatre and the drama criticism he wrote for many years were of the same order. Some of his readers, though not the most attentive, have been heard to say that Chiaromonte was interested not so much in the theatre itself as in philosophising about plays and performances. Others found him too stern or too indulgent. The truth, if I am not mistaken, is that what Chiaromonte loved in the theatre was the mirror of man's encounter with man—society looking at itself—and of every man's encounter with his own destiny.

UNIQUE *(or almost) among Italian intellectuals of our time, Chiaromonte was not a devotee of either Marx or Freud. His critical distance from these and other doctrines was established by the precept he selected as the programme of* Tempo Presente: *"To promote a reexamination of current modes of thought by comparing them with the reality of the present world." To carry out this examination, or rather to achieve a new awareness, Chiaromonte considered it valuable to have another look at Greek thought. He had been doing so himself for a long time and had already expressed some of the conclusions he had drawn from that reading.*

The reality that Chiaromonte saw around him today was a world of mindless violence: "Reason can have no hold on the individual who is convinced that the only purpose of life is to achieve oneself at any cost, to manifest in any way at all his existence here in this world, and who believes in nothing else. . . ."

This seemed to him modern man's essential conviction and "the sole absolute" that modern society has been able to express—"the right of every individual to total satisfaction, everyone's possession of reason as if by natural right, and the expression of oneself as the final purpose of life."

> *"The dementia, the violence, and discouragement in which we live have their moral origin in this principle, which is neither of the Left nor of the Right, neither of the* avant-garde *nor of the* arrière-garde, *and which no society, no form of culture or spiritual life can long withstand. However, absurd though it may be, as things stand today this principle prevails. . . . But it has no truth in it. And without truth, all it deserves is irony on the one hand and pity on the other."*

There has been much grief at Chiaromonte's death, a natural grief that has been expressed in a great variety of forms. One expression particularly struck me for its aptness and truth. It is a tercet from Dante's Purgatorio *(Canto XXII, lines 67–69) that Ugo Stille (of the "Corriere delle Sera") quoted in New York when he learned of his friend Chiaromonte's sudden death:*

Facesti come quei che va di notte,
che porta il lume retro e sè non giova
ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte.

Thou didst as he who travels in the night,
Who bears a lamp behind him, nor befriends
Himself, but those who follow leads aright. . . .

Paolo Milano

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aims, and muddle their political thought with confused concepts and diluted ethics.

It is not a case of what Julien Benda called the *"trahison des clercs"* in a famous pamphlet in 1927 (in which, incidentally, there was a good deal of truth). Benda accused the *"clercs"* of treason for having put their names, ideas, and talents at the service, first of State, and later of Party, propaganda, during and after the first World War. Against this degradation he claimed the right of intellectuals to remain strictly faithful to what one might call the tenets of reason, and to go to battle only when these were called in question—as Benda himself had seen happen during *l'affaire Dreyfus*.

The argument was weak, however, because it left the *"clerc"* free to decide for himself when these tenets were involved and when they were not; and if the truth involved in the Dreyfus case was an eternal principle, it took very little effort to maintain that the principle of freedom for which Republican France was fighting Imperial Germany was also eternal (as well, of course, as the "principle of justice" incarnate in the Bolshevik régime). So why should the principles of the so-called rational, Christian West, against those of the "barbarous, destructive East," not be eternal as well?

This is not what we are dealing with today; nor was it really what they were dealing with in those days, either. The first and most brilliant intellectual to prove this was André Malraux, who had already, in *Tentation de l'Occident* in 1926 (and even earlier, in an essay on "A Certain European Youth"), gone to the heart of the matter. If Europe was to be saved from decline, there was no place in it for the *"clerc"*. The intellectual with any awareness of things must fling himself into the furnace of history, must "think" his history while participating totally in it. Malraux was well aware that this was a tragic choice, since it meant pursuing the logic of violent action and accepting the fact that Europe's destiny was one of wars and revolutions which might destroy it. But there was, he felt, no other way out of the stagnation of nihilism.

MALRAUX WAS at that time influenced by Nietzsche, Spengler, Marx, and (through Bernard Groethuysen) by Heidegger too; and, as was to appear clearly in his novels, he had already grasped the essence of Existentialist thought. But what decided his involvement in history as something thought out and acted out at the same time was undoubtedly his own experience of Indo-China in revolt and China in revolution. Added to the new power of Soviet Russia, these upheavals seemed to him clear indications of "the meaning of history," and therefore of the intellectual's new function.

But wherein did this new function lie? It was in the radical acceptance of the Machiavellian principle that political action had its own morality, its own logic, its own directing ideas, which were independent of the morality of "unarmed prophets," the logic of the learned, and the ideas of philosophers.

The principle was not new, but the way of reconsidering it was. Because, unlike Machiavelli, these intellectuals, whether Marxists or not, were clearly aware of the fact that you cannot disregard the basically moral nature of politics without providing the support of an ideology that constitutes an ethical system itself; indeed that shows the only possible meaning morality can have in our time. Without it political action becomes pure nonsense and pure violence.

IS THERE ANY objection one can raise to this modern *Weltanschauung*? A single one, but a radical one: that this way of thinking not only makes politics into a form of morality but makes it into the supreme sphere, the final, total goal of moral activity. This in its turn suggests that the meaning of human life lies in politics, just as, to the religious man, its meaning lies in the existence of God.

Politics considered thus, and elevated to a reality beyond which there is nothing but mystification and empty words, has as its inevitable result (whatever the ideology it professes, even the most libertarian) the imposition of a moral principle by force—whether this principle is justice, equality, or even individual freedom. This at once means mass violence, maltreatment of the individual, and enslavement of social life.

The result is intolerable and absurd: not merely because of what recent history has shown us (since history teaches only those who wish to understand it), but because it contradicts, not so much common sense and morality, as the very nature of political action. For political action means working towards an end that may be right or not, but always case by case, fact by fact, moment by moment. It must never deal with things wholesale and at one fell swoop, as if human events and facts were logical formulae or figures, and as if ideas were facts.

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Dr Johnson as Poet

By John Wain

AS JAMES BOSWELL approached the concluding pages of his *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, he decided, lawyer-fashion, that he ought to provide a summing-up, and proceeded to gird himself for the effort of writing that "character" of Johnson that is one of the most remarkable feats of his great book. He describes Johnson's physical appearance and presence, gives a sketch-map of his intellectual interests, outlines his moral and psychological nature, and estimates the powers of his mind. In the course of these remarks, Boswell puts in two observations that are, or should be, very much in the mind of anyone approaching Johnson as a poet. One is that Johnson's mind was so fertile of imagery that "he might have been perpetually a poet"; the other is that the imagery of Johnson's prose is more luxuriant than that of his verse.

Boswell, that is, had seen clearly two facts about Johnson which then became obscured for well over a hundred years: that he was a natural poet; and that the poetic power of his mind was, in some respects, more free to find itself in prose than in verse.

No one doubts that the ability to strike out concrete and original images is one of the primary features of the poetic mind. (At the present moment, with the collapse of all conventions of verse-form and a total confusion as to what constitutes "verbal music", it is perhaps the *only* feature that is generally recognised.) All good writers have it, but the poet has it most noticeably, and carries it—as Johnson did—into his conversation as well as his formal compositions. I remember Robert Frost, talking at the table about some woman whom conventional language would have described as "elusive" or "mysterious." "She was like an orange pip on a plate," said Frost.

If we seek to recognise Johnson's poetic quality through his imagery, the easiest way is to take any volume of his prose works and let it fall open at any point.

> Very few are involved in great events, or have their thread of life entwined with the chain of causes on which Armies or nations are suspended....
>
> Of the thousands and ten thousands that perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction; pale, torpid, spiritless, and helpless; gasping and groaning unpitied among men made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery, and whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance.
>
> The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

A man who can write like this is not likely to fail completely when he attempts poetry. On the other hand, it should be admitted, most poetic conventions are limiting as well as enabling. One sees this very clearly at a time like the present, when most poets are either ranting *à la* Speakers' Corner or lisping in baby talk. But to some extent it has always been evident. Within the romantic conventions, there are some things that De Quincey's prose can do that Wordsworth's verse cannot. It was T. S. Eliot who laid it down, about fifty years ago, that "Poetry should be at least as well written as prose." But the fact is that the two forms can never achieve a regularised

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parity; where verse is not better than good prose, it is usually worse.

JOHNSON WROTE POETRY during most of his long life. As a schoolboy in Lichfield, he was already writing verse remarkable enough to be copied out and preserved, and one of his finest poems, the elegy on Levet [see p. 68], was written in the last year of his life. Not only was the making of verses a constant endeavour with Johnson, it was also a central plank in his programme of activity. Though his main concern was with wisdom ("You are a philosopher, Dr Johnson"), he never doubted that poetry was the chief human source of wisdom as well as of solace. He studied poetry, criticised it, translated it, constantly quoted and meditated on it. The most satisfying of his prose works, the *Lives of the Poets*, could only have been written by someone who had lived with English poetry for nearly seventy years, frequenting it not only as part of the essential business of his life, but also as the favourite room in his intellectual house.

With all this lifelong devotion both as reader and writer, Johnson achieved importance as a poet only in a small number of compositions. (The same could be said of Marvell, of Browning, of Dylan Thomas.) The only *indispensable* poems of Johnson are *London*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, the poem on Levet, and possibly the pointed and energetic *jeu d'esprit*, "Long Expected One and Twenty." All these poems are fairly easily available. They turn up in standard anthologies and also in such widely-disseminated one-volume selections from Johnson as Mona Wilson's in the Reynard Library (Hart-Davis) or R. W. Chapman's (Oxford). So that Johnson's essential poetic achievement has long been within easy reach of anyone interested. Yet we are here presented with a *third* complete edition of his poetry.[1] First there was the pioneering Oxford edition by Nichol and McAdam. Then the equally elaborate edition by McAdam (the same) and Milne which appears as Volume 6 of the Yale edition of Johnson's works. Now Dr Fleeman has worked independently over Johnson's complete poetry once more, and offers us his collection inexpensively, in Penguin form. I could understand anyone who objected that, considering how small is the tip of the Johnsonian poetic iceberg, this repeated presentation of the total mass is supererogatory. Understand, but not agree.

[1] *Samuel Johnson: The Complete English Poems.* Edited by J. D. FLEEMAN. Penguin Books, 65p.

WE NEED all of Johnson's verse: even the admittedly unsuccessful parts of it like *Irene*. Without a sense of his solid and continuing endeavour, without that basic groundplan of his poetic strategy which can only come from frequenting his work, we shall look uncomprehendingly even at his most shining successes. We need the feel for his language, the sound of his rhythms, sweeping all the way from the minor work to the major. We need the impromptu translations, the parodies and burlesques, for the light they shed on Johnson's approach to the poetic art. (For instance, Johnson made two translations of a passage from the *Medea* of Euripides; one in mockery of the tumid style of Robert Potter's then celebrated version, the other serious. To compare the two is to see at once what Johnson thought poetic language should, and should not, be called upon to do; it sheds light not only on Johnson's own practice, but on the reasons for his detestation of, say, Gray's Odes.) We need the theatrical prologues and epilogues for their testimony that, failure though Johnson was as a dramatic poet, he knew well how to write verse to be declaimed from a stage—that is, his deficiency as a dramatic poet is imaginative and not stylistic.

And, of course, with Johnson as with any poet, we need a sense of the literary culture within which his work roots itself: what poets were current, which of the abiding classics were at that time read as living writers are read, what knowledge could be assumed in the reader. All Johnson's work is founded in a civilisation that rates literature very high and knows it well. The rich, complex allusiveness of the Juvenalian satires is not, essentially, disqualified or discounted by the bare directness of the elegy on Levet; for even in that stark, unadorned, bitterly honest poem, one feels the pressure of a set of social assumptions, the whisper that a man devoid of polite learning is not a fit subject for an elegiac poem:

> *Nor, letter'd arrogance, deny*
> *Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.*

DR FLEEMAN'S EDITION is obviously to be welcomed. Both the other existing editions are very expensive, and this is a mere 65 pence; both the other editions modernise Johnson's spelling and punctuation, and this reproduces them, which I find interesting without quite attaching the weight to it that Dr Fleeman does. One is never quite satisfied, of course; the annotations seem to me, as all annotations are bound to seem to someone, too full at certain points and unaccountably thin at

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others. For instance, in the notes on *London*, I don't really need to be told that a bramble is a prickly plant, or that "clap" means gonorrhoea; the space economised in notes like these might have been given to shedding some light on the poem's relationship to its original in Juvenal, about which the edition tells us nothing. Occasionally a note seems simply irrelevant and confusing; when the virtuous man shakes the dust of London off his feet and makes for Wales, Johnson says that he is "Resolv'd" to "Give to St. David one true Briton more." A clear line if ever there was one: But Dr Fleeman proffers the comment:

> *true Briton* perhaps an allusion to the short-lived (1723-4) periodical essay of that name, conducted by the profligate Duke of Wharton, president of the "Hell-Fire Club", arch-Tory and anti-Walpolean, who was exiled in 1729.

Neither the Oxford nor the Yale edition has this attention-dispersing note, and one thinks the better of them for it. Again, Dr Fleeman provides a good deal of interesting material from early drafts of Johnson's poems, but the occasional discreet *sic* would have been a help in letting us know whether an egregious error is in the draft, or a misprint in this edition. On p. 194, the bottom two lines, for instance —did Johnson write "wealh" for "wealth" and "in" for "is", or have the Penguin proof-readers been nodding? And if this kind of thing seems too detailed, please remember that Dr Fleeman's edition sets out to give us detail; it invites us to pay attention, and when we do pay attention we are often left with a puzzle.

However, the edition as a whole seems very much a Good Thing: as, one might add, does this whole series of Penguin English Poets.

IN HIS OWN DAY, Johnson's reputation as a poet was founded on the two satires adapted from Juvenal: *London* (Juvenal's Third) and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (Juvenal's Tenth). *London* established his reputation, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* buttressed and solidified it. We can hardly do better than approach his poetry by this same avenue, if only because 18th-century poetry (till mid-century, at least) was in general highly allusive, and the use of continuous allusion in these two poems will give us a perception of Johnson's solidarity with his culture.

Allusion has many uses. Its application may be casual and glancing, or sustained and purposive. The most important thing to grasp, however, is that allusion is part of the texture of a poem rather than its paraphrasable content. Allusion does not state: it enacts. It is a feature of the physical bearing of the poem, the way it carries itself. What, for example, is Joyce's *Ulysses* conveying by means of its continuous parallel with the *Odyssey?* What is that large-scale allusion "saying"? (And I hope no one will bring up the irrelevant objection that Ulysses is "not a poem." It is more a poem than most verse compositions.) The back-projection from Homer, behind Mr Bloom's day in Dublin, is *enacting* a whole series of judgments rather than stating them.

Johnson, at the time of writing *London*, was a hungry fighter. Recently arrived in the metropolis after a depressing series of failures in the Midlands, living very close to the possibility of a failure so total that it would involve destitution, he was in a hurry to make his name. That he should choose to do so by means of "imitation" was a mark of his willingness to play for big stakes, since Pope's brilliant series of "Imitations of Horace" was very much the reigning toast in poetry, and one of the best of them came out in that same year of 1738. Johnson also chose a point of departure that would force the reader to judge his work by the highest standards. Both Dryden and the younger poet whom Dryden so generously admired, John Oldham, had worked over Juvenal's Third Satire.

Johnson's cool choice of difficult ground to fight over would convey a great deal to the 18th-century connoisseur, the "wit" whose approbation could make the new reputation, before a line of his poem had been read. But there were many other choices. The whole technique of allusion, in fact, presents the writer with a continuous series of choices. Johnson could count on a readership who knew Juvenal's poem about as well as a bookish person of our time knows, say, *Vanity Fair*. When he departed from Juvenal, he would have to depart in a definite direction and the reader would spot that direction. From line to line, the poem would involve the reader in a strenuous game, an exercise in quick-wittedness.

As an old man, Johnson looked back on this kind of writing with a certain disapproval. "Such imitations", he wrote in his *Life of Pope*:

> cannot give pleasure to common readers. The man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude,

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and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern.

This is the wisdom of age. But it was the *young* Johnson who wrote *London,* and young poets are generally more interested in displaying their brilliance than in "giving pleasure to common readers." And the Johnson of the 1780s did at least put his finger on the kind of success that the Johnson of the 1730s was aiming at. "The man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel"—and if it is a little "strained", who cares? It is like the difference between the Eliot of *The Waste Land* and the Eliot of the *Four Quartets;* wisdom has come in at one door, and pyrotechnics and brilliant showing-off have gone out through the other. And there is something in us that regrets the loss as it welcomes the gain.

TO ERECT A MODERN POEM on the scaffolding of an ancient one is also an affirmation. It testifies to a faith in the enduring truth of literature. If what Juvenal said about Rome is still true, *mutatis mutandis,* about 18th-century London, that serves as a demonstration of the strength and durability of Juvenal's satire. By implication, it also justifies the faith that the new satire, too, may live on under another sky. And this still holds good if the allusion is used ironically, if there is a deliberately exploited gap between the loftiness of the allusion and the lowness of the context in which it appears. When Eliot, in *The Waste Land,* says of the crowd flowing over London Bridge

I had not known death had undone so many,

he is quoting a line near the beginning of Dante's *Inferno,* not merely to strengthen his poem with a telling allusion ("These people remind me of the damned in Dante's vision of hell"), but also to affirm his belief in the strength of Dante's vision ("Damnation is damnation wherever you find it; my experience, for what it is worth, confirms his"). Juvenal was given to quoting fragments of Homeric epic verse amid his denunciations of modern decadence, so that the juxtaposition would make the modern look even more sordid. Johnson uses this allusive poet as the basis of his own continuous allusion. He sees European literature as a self-perpetuating and self-bracing structure, and this underwrites the solid confidence in the value of a writer's life that comes out in all his judgments. "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors", he writes in the Preface to the Dictionary, seventeen years after *London:* and he *means* it.

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ALTOGETHER, and taking account of the historical circumstances, one cannot avoid feeling that the later Johnson was being unnecessarily severe on the earlier. (By implication, that is, since he follows the honourable practice of never mentioning his own work when he writes as a critic. He has many penetrating things to say about problems that have confronted him in his own practice, but he says them apropos the work of other men.) To say, in the eighteenth century, that "such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers", one must have in mind a very common reader indeed. A knowledge of Latin was then very general among educated people; it is noteworthy that, though Johnson seldom wrote any formal criticism of Latin poetry, he shows, casually, an intimate knowledge not only of classical but of neo-Latin literature. More, he takes it for granted that some, at least, of his readers will share this knowledge and interest. The *Lives of the Poets* is peppered with references to modern Latin poetry. Comparing Milton's early Latin verse with its predecessors in England, he says, "If we produced anything worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps Alabaster's *Roxana*." And in the *Life of John Philips,* commenting on a Latin ode by that poet, he says casually, "It seems better turned than the odes of Hannes." In the *Life of Rochester* he even transcribes, in full, a two-page Latin poem by one Passerat, merely because it is interesting and "not common." Obviously he has in mind the lettered country gentleman who does not find it convenient to travel and consult libraries, and likes to share in a good thing. (People like his father's customers in the country houses of Staffordshire in the early decades of the century.)

If the elderly Johnson can cater so liberally for a classical taste, it seems hard to imply blame for the younger Johnson's desire to "surprise and delight" the reader who is a good Latinist. When *London* was published, Johnson insisted on having the more immediately relevant passages from Juvenal printed at the foot of the page, so that the reader, without the trouble of looking up, could see the neater strokes of the adaptation. It is true that the result is "party-coloured" and "neither original nor translated", but so are many much admired poems, *e.g.,* Ezra Pound's *chinoiseries* or Robert Lowell's *Imitations.* When, in later years, Johnson poured contemptuous scorn on Macpherson's *Ossian* as a "translation" of a non-existent original, he might have reflected that Macpherson, in his turn, was producing an "imitation" adapting to 18th-century taste a pattern handed down from antiquity; the difference being that in the case of *Ossian* the inherited pattern was not an actual, consultable work but a large general idea, the idea of primitive and romantic grandeur.

So much by way of excusing Johnson's exhibited cleverness in *London.* In larger outline, the shift from Juvenal to Johnson is obvious enough. Johnson is less scurrilous; he tones down the virulence, the pelting scabrous detail of Juvenal's tirade; he is not in that sense, a natural satirist. His speciality is the acute diagnosis of error and weakness, and the solemn warning; he takes no pride in his power to scold. Where Juvenal beats down, Johnson strives to lift. The tone of his poem is sombre and accusatory, but the passion that flows through its positives, those areas where it finds something to praise and recommend, is, if anything, stronger than the feeling of revulsion.

One sees this clearly in the scene-setting. Johnson follows Juvenal in the narrative framework of the poem. In both, a stern and dignified patriot is shaking the dust of the city off his feet—"Umbricius" in Juvenal, "Thales" in Johnson. He halts at the exit of the city to make a farewell oration, which is listened to submissively by the poet, the "I" of the poem. Finally, with the prophecy that one day the poet, too, will find the city finally intolerable, he stalks off. Now, Juvenal (if my memory serves) has Umbricius halt at the gate on the Appian Way; a place hallowed by patriotic associations, but now disfigured by the sordid dwellings of squatting foreigners, etc., etc. Johnson, aiming at a more positive note, has Thales take a boat from Greenwich, birthplace of Elizabeth I, and he and his companion allow a deliberate pause while their hearts overflow with patriotic emotion.

> *On* Thames's *Banks, in silent Thought we stood,*
> *Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver Flood;*
> *Struck with the Seat that gave Eliza birth,*
> *We kneel, and kiss the consecrated Earth;*
> *In pleasing Dreams the blissful Age renew,*
> *And call Britannia's Glories back to view;*
> *Behold her Cross triumphant on the Main,*
> *The Guard of Commerce, and the Dread of* Spain.

Johnson is, of course, being pointedly topical here, since Elizabeth had been the scourge of Spain, a nation with whom the English were currently having trouble and against whom they were in fact about to fight the "War of Jenkins' Ear." He is also, more discreetly, reflecting a personal alignment. He was lodging at Greenwich when he wrote the poem, and the constant sight of Inigo Jones' masterpiece must have recalled to his mind a more exalted dynasty on the English throne. The reference to Green-

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wich thus takes its place beside the loving mention of "Trent" as a river typifying pastoral calm and the rural virtues. And here we abut on the question of the poem's personal, even autobiographical qualities.

ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE and compelling features of all Johnson's writings is its very individual blend of the personal with the highly universalised. His tone is magisterial, his language presses always towards generalisation, and yet Johnson, the man himself, is always palpably present. He never hesitates to make a personal utterance, even in contexts which would seem to demand an entirely neutral, impersonal note. The *locus classicus* here is, of course, the Preface to the *Dictionary*, with its moving self-portrait, concretely presenting a certain man in a certain situation.

> In the hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors: whether I shall add any thing by my own writings to the reputation of English literature, must be left to time: much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me. . . .

Re-reading such a passage, one thinks also of the personal fragments embedded in the *Lives of the Poets*—tributes to dead friends, scraps of reminiscence—as well as the constant pressure of Johnson's own stated beliefs and prejudices, like a steadily running tide, against which everything has to make its way; and the personal and autobiographical snatches in the *Dictionary* (*Salve, magna parens* after the mention of Lichfield, *etc.*); and of such vignettes from life as Johnson hastily composing the great *Rambler* on Procrastination while the printer's boy stood by for the copy and carried it off sheet by sheet, because Johnson had procrastinated.

JOHNSON was a great writer. But he was not every kind of great writer. In some of the qualities for which one goes to major literature, he was notably deficient. He had none of that soaring imagination which can leave the individual consciousness and site itself, for the time being, in a consciousness altogether different. When Goldsmith said that Johnson could never have written an Aesopian fable about little fishes because he would have made them all talk like whales, he meant that he would have made them talk like Johnson. Everybody in Johnson's works talks like Johnson: not necessarily in idiom—in some of the *Rambler* essays he shows quite a deft hand at realistic dialogue—but inasmuch as they utter Johnsonian moral perceptions.

I believe that Johnson was a great autobiographer. His life continually and directly fed his work. When he writes movingly and memorably, which is very often, he does so because he is passing on to us some lesson he has learnt in the intense and unremitting struggle of his life. He is not, strictly speaking, an imaginative writer. He has the moral imagination, but he lacks the kind of imagination that underlies fiction and the drama. Hence the curious demand for literal truthfulness that is such a limiting factor in his criticism. And the failure of *Irene*, which we will come to in a moment. And the undervaluing of contemporary masterpieces such as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Tristram Shandy*.

But there is a compensating strength. Because his mind does not travel over the whole range represented by literary creation at its broadest, it concentrates like an enormous burning-glass at the point where it operates. His way of growing was to meditate intensely on his own experience and the experience which life brought under his immediate view. Then, when he came to write, he passed this personal truth through the distilling apparatus of his style, and it emerged as—almost—universal. Almost. There is still a flavour of Johnson about it. We feel, as we read, the urgency and directness of a personal statement, a handing-on of costly experience.

If it were not for the stylistic transmutation, the continual tension between Johnson's personal way of seeing things and his generalised way of saying them, we might be left with a body of work capable of enjoying a considerable vogue at this moment. At present, the whole imaginative side of literature, the ability to take root in an alien consciousness and interpret it from within, is neglected. The catch-cries are all in favour of the confessional, the directly self-revelatory. The highest praise goes to the writer who most energetically documents the ultimate, sickening recesses of his personal doubts and weaknesses and failures. It is no accident that the trendiest books of our day are either masturbatory fantasies, like Henry Miller's *Sexus*, or actually concerned with masturbation. If they are not, they are usually the ravings of a drug-addict. Tell me the truth—but only if it is alienated enough! In this atmosphere, Johnson's work becomes invisible because of its grave, classical, generalised language and its avoidance of detail. He writes as befits a man who can say, "Nothing

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can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature." And to represent "general nature" is not to avoid detail but to process it, to gather up a mass of it and squeeze out the essence.

Thus, where a Balzac or a Turgenev gives us the essential quality of his experience in the form of fable, or a Keats or a Valéry in the form of free-standing metaphor, Johnson specialises in the direct address. Behind his most generalised homily we see him, plainly, standing there. It is not merely truth he is offering us, it is Johnson's truth. It comes to us strained through the fibres of his individual being.

With this in mind, let us turn again to his poetry. And first, back to *London,* for we have not yet finished with that remarkable poem.

SOME READERS, their minds full of the image of Johnson the great Londoner, have found an amusing discrepancy between the sentiments expressed in *London*—the revulsion from the city, the longing for rural quiet and self-possession—and the opinions they associate with Johnson the man ("the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross", *etc.*). In their eyes, this discrepancy has reduced the poem to the status of a "literary exercise" (a phrase, in itself, full of pitfalls for the superficial thinker). But if biographical canons are to be applied at all, they surely work the other way. When Johnson wrote *London,* he had been in the metropolis hardly more than a year. Moreover, he was not—very much not—the kind of provincial who does not feel that he is living until he achieves the status of a Londoner. He had tried very hard, for many years, to establish himself in the Midlands, and even after going to London and throwing in his lot with Grub Street he still nourished the ideal of a quiet life in the country, for he soon returned to Staffordshire on a visit lasting many months, during which he renewed his efforts to find a schoolmastering post. Only after further, and final, discouragement did he return to the city.

London, to the mature Johnson, was a territory full of dangers and opportunities which he had conquered and within which his authority was unchallenged. (When George III, tipped off at his own request that Dr Johnson was in the Library, went there to seek converse with him, it is evident that there was some doubt, in the minds of both men, as to who was granting audience to whom.) To the young Johnson, a newcomer without money or influential friends, and knowing himself

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conspicuously deficient in the "arts of pleasing", London must have seemed terrifyingly noisy, violent, dirty and cruel, while at the same time resplendent with prizes to be won. After the quiet streets and squares of Lichfield, it must have seemed a roaring arena; after the close-knit society he was used to, the overlapping circles of trade, cathedral and garrison, it must have seemed freezingly impersonal and indifferent.

IF LONDON REPELLED and scared Johnson, it must also, at other times, have put him on his mettle. Most young men, especially if they are potential artists, spend much of their formative years in a pendulum-swing between fierce exultation in the consciousness of their power, and depressed misgivings which occasionally intensify into panic. *London* is moving and memorable because it expresses both these states of mind at once. The strong, emphatic rhythms, the densely-packed language, and the continuous display of literary virtuosity come from the exultation of a young mind conscious of its strength. The revulsion, the very genuine recoil from the chaos and cruelty of the big city, comes from the distress of the same mind forced into a situation of loneliness in an environment it cannot control.

The Vanity of Human Wishes, Johnson's other fabric stretched over the framework of Juvenal, is a calmer performance, more stately and generalised. In printing it, he dispensed with the apparatus from Juvenal; the manipulation of a parallel was no longer so important. Having shown what he could do in that direction, he chose this time a poem in which Juvenal himself is more dignified and general, less scurrilous and scolding. In this poem, too, Johnson is more nearly the equal of Juvenal, whose strength as a poet (as far as I can judge) appears to lie in the gloomy epigrammatic power of his language; he is full of terse, loaded phrases (*panem et circenses,* for instance, or *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*) which have gone on being quoted, down the centuries, by people who do not know whom they are quoting. What Johnson loses in the excitement and immediacy of *London* he gains in a settled strength of language, a steady thrust that is like the thrust of Dryden but more stately and less bounding. It is a poem that speaks particularly to those with a taste for the classical, the anti-idiosyncratic. T. S. Eliot particularly admired the set-piece *exemplum* of Charles X of Sweden (lines 191-222), and one can see why; it is a generalised portrait, a "character", like *Gerontion.*

The power of Johnson's poetic language, as put forth in *The Vanity of Human Wishes* and the poems that belong with it, has not, in recent years, gone unrecognised. There is, notably, that fine essay by F. R. Leavis in *The Common Pursuit* (1952), where he comes very close to a sufficient critical definition of what Johnson is doing:

> . . . the style is remarkable for body. It is a generalising style; its extraordinary weight is a generalising weight . . . Johnson's abstractions and generalities are not mere empty explicitnesses substituting for the concrete; they focus a wide range of profoundly representative experience—experience felt by the reader as movingly present.

That last phrase, about the "movingly present" experience behind Johnson's general statements, seems to be Dr Leavis' way of expressing that same sense of Johnson as a great autobiographer, a writer who constantly brings his own experience before the seat of direct judgment, which I was struggling to express earlier in this essay. And we can, with equal profit, follow up his hint about the "generalising weight" of Johnson's style. It is a style that manages to blend a high degree of concreteness and visuality with a correspondingly high level of generality. The thrust is always towards some statement that will be true in a large majority of cases. ("Nothing will please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature.") We can see this powerful blend in action in any representative passage: the lines on Wolsey, for example.

> *In full-blown Dignity, see* Wolsey *stand,*
> *Law in his Voice, and Fortune in his Hand:*
> *To him the Church, the Realm, their Pow'rs consign,*
> *Thro' him the Rays of regal Bounty shine,*
> *Turn'd by his Nod the Stream of Honour flows,*
> *His Smile alone Security bestows:*
> *Still to new Heights his restless Wishes tow'r,*
> *Claim leads to Claim, and Pow'r advances Pow'r;*
> *Till Conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,*
> *And Rights submitted, left him none to seize.*
> *At length his Sov'reign frowns—the Train of State*
> *Mark the keen Glance, and watch the Sign to hate.*
> *Where-e'er he turns he meets a Stranger's Eye,*
> *His Suppliants scorn him, and his Followers fly;*
> *At once is lost the Pride of aweful State,*
> *The golden Canopy, the glitt'ring Plate,*
> *The regal Palace, the luxurious Board,*
> *The liv'ried Army, and the Menial Lord,*
> *With Age, with Cares, with Maladies oppress'd.*
> *He seeks the Refuge of Monastic Rest.*
> *Grief aids Disease, remember'd Folly stings,*
> *And his last Sighs reproach the Faith of Kings.*

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Concise, weighty, strongly rhythmical, the lines make everything work and set everything in motion. There is no tendency here to stand back from the subject and pass it inertly in review. This is obvious enough in those three lines whose verbs all turn on facial and ocular expressions—

At length his Sov'reign frowns—the Train of State
Mark the keen Glance, and watch the Sign to hate.
Where-e'er he turns he meets a Stranger's Eye . . .

—but the mixture is even better in those passages where Johnson is frankly dealing with abstractions, but abstractions at work, demonstrating their power:

Still to new Heights his restless Wishes tow'r,
Claim leads to Claim, and Pow'r advances Pow'r.

The most characteristic line of all, perhaps, is

Turn'd by his Nod the Stream of Honour flows.

Here, the image is intensely concrete. The statesman's nod is like the flick of a powerful switch that instantly diverts in its source some colossal force like electric current. We *see* the "stream of honour" turning in its course in response to the slight and casual physical movement—a "nod"—and the image is powerful and actual. On the other hand, the actualities of "honour"—this or that lucrative appointment, this or that outward mark of respect and social standing—remain unparticularised.

IT IS THIS QUALITY in Johnson's language that makes all talk of "personification" so thin and meaningless. When he read 18th-century poetry in a hurry or with fatigued attention, we register the fairly frequent occurrence of nouns which have a general significance and which usually sport a capital letter. This we call Personification, and the category passes into the text-books. 18th-century poets used Personification: it expressed their stately, generalised view of life; they saw experience in terms of a classical frieze, of "storied urn and animated bust", and their language reflected it. But as soon as we begin to lean on this notion of Personification, it gives way like all words which try to define linguistic effects. ("Onomatopoeia", for instance.) When a poet like Johnson uses a noun, he nearly always pushes it some of the way towards general, emblematic applicability. If he pushes it all the way, we can fairly call the result

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Personification, and if we are busily engaged in modernising his text we can signal this by a capital letter. ("Fame and Victory can hover over a standard", *etc.*) But as soon as we have made this decision, we are committed to a policy which uses capitalisation in a limiting way, negatively as well as positively. If we *don't* capitalise the initial letter, it isn't personification, if we do, it is. This makes the Augustan use of language seem much more rigid and schematic than in fact it is. Johnson, to come back to him, uses a full degree of personification rather rarely, but a lesser degree habitually. In the last couplet of the passage quoted above, "Grief", "Disease" and "Folly" are all very nearly allegorised and personified, but not quite; and when he goes definitely over the border and uses a full personification, as in 1. 215

But did not Chance at length her Error mend?

the effect is not different enough to justify an isolating badge like capitalisation. That, in brief, is the case against modernising Johnson's text, as the Yale and Oxford editions do and as the Penguin does not. The Yale edition remarks, a trifle smugly, that it "reduces capitalisation and italics to modern usage." But there is no "modern usage" that corresponds to the kind of poetic language Johnson is using. Modern writers simply don't use language with that degree of generality; if they did, they would be postulating a social infra-structure that is just not there.

The instinctive naturalness with which Johnson uses this kind of language—concrete and abstract at the same time—is illustrated by the fact that he doesn't seem to have heard of the rule that Personification has to have a capital letter and Non-Personification must do without one. He scatters capitals everywhere in *London* and *Vanity*; on the other hand, in the elegy on Levet, certain words whose force is obviously so general as to amount to personification are given without capitals, as in the fifth stanza.

THE GENERALISING WEIGHT of Johnson's language has another function. It acts as a necessary counterpoise to the crushing bulk of his personality. It keeps his utterance at a distance from the self, while allowing the self to be adequately defined within it. This kind of distancing is essential to all Johnson's imaginative work, all that work in which he offers the reader a story or a poem rather than a piece of direct instruction or admonition. It is, in fact, one of the ways in which his work as an artist separates itself from his work as a moralist.

The two are, as we have seen, so close as to be in some respects indistinguishable. Johnson must have felt, whether consciously or not, that his work in poetry and fiction needed to be marked off in some decisive way from those utterances in which he was magisterial and counselling. Accordingly, we see him seeking always for some framework of dramatisation and distancing. In the Juvenal satires he had the *persona* of the ancient poet and the parallel between Rome and England. In that large proportion of his work which is in one degree or another satiric, we have the insistent presence of the play-element, the strong flavour of burlesque or parody which concentrates attention on the manner of saying rather than the matter conveyed, and this again moves us away from the purely personal centre and shades the intense glare of Johnson's naked personality. There is a third means to which he often resorted: the fabulous setting, the deliberate transposition of the action into an unreal (usually an oriental) landscape.

It is here that we approach *Irene*. This crucial and revealing failure cannot be estimated apart from all that category of Johnson's work that we might call the oriental-fantastic. This would take in *Rasselas* and also such shorter things as "The Three Fountains" and also, though for once it is not oriental, "The Hermit of Teneriffe." The roots of all the work in this category are three-fold.

First, there is the normal 18th-century machinery of the "oriental tale." In the effort to bring to bear a satiric focus on society—and that great age of self-consciousness provided a continuous satiric commentary on its own proceedings—the necessary initial step was to find a leverage *outside* the society. The polite, ironic, unfathomable oriental was obviously an attractive choice here. A pair of shrewd, slanting eyes behind which one could postulate an ancient civilisation, without too much hampering knowledge of what that civilisation actually entailed, made the perfect peep-holes for the satirist. Hence the proliferation of such works as Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. From this point of view, Johnson can be seen as playing his own individual game within a well-understood set of rules.

But there was more, Johnson was a lifelong student of manners, customs, civilisations. The description of a poet's life-work in *Rasselas* (Chapter 11) is doubtless to some extent ironic, but there is no irony in the prescription that the poet should "trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by the various institutions and accidental influences of climate or

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custom." He would, it is certain, have welcomed the opportunity to roam the earth and see these climates and customs for himself. The old caricature of Johnson, largely derived from Macaulay, as an inveterate Londoner who had no standard of comparison except with what went on "within the bills of mortality", is simply a misconception. If Johnson spent twenty years in London without travelling anywhere, that is because he was too poor to afford it. From the time he got his pension he made an extended trip every summer; he went with the Thrales to France and was disappointed when they cancelled a subsequent trip to Italy on which he was to have gone along; he visited North Wales and Brighton; he took an arduous jaunt round the Hebrides in his sixties. Further, all his life he devoured the literature of travel, and made an important contribution to it in his *Journey to the Western Islands*. But he ended that book with a reminder to the reader that the thoughts he has been sharing are the thoughts of "one who has seen but little." He knew that his life had been deficient in opportunities for first-hand observation. He knew that others knew far more than he did about the infinite variation of human customs and beliefs, and whenever possible he urged them to put their knowledge on record.

THESE TWO ROOTS entwine with a third. Johnson's reading of travel-literature shaded into his lifelong fondness for romances. It was a taste he was rather ashamed of; in his criticism he is careful to draw a distinction between the kind of writing that ministers to truth and the kind that is merely fanciful. Being himself indolent and an easy prey to slothful reverie—often, it is clear, of a kind that seriously distressed the moralist in him—he felt in duty bound not to encourage the potentially bad habit of day-dreaming. But his taste for romance, for the free-floating story of marvels in an exotic setting, persisted. It took hold of him during those long days of browsing among the stock in his father's shop and it never left him. Naturally the frontier between serious study and romance-devouring was a shadowy one. His first extended work was a translation from the Latin of Father Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*, a serious work by a Jesuit missionary. But if Abyssinia was an object of strict scientific survey, it remained also a place of the mind. The Abyssinia of which Rasselas is Crown Prince is not the Abyssinia of Lobo.

The oriental-fantastic side of Johnson's work comes out of this mixed soil. First, it is standard 18th-century procedure. Then, it ties in with Johnson's curiosity about men and manners.

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Third, it is an attempt to grow some useful crops on that marshy ground within himself which he feared and distrusted.

Within this framework, we can see readily enough that *Rasselas* and the shorter fables are successful, while *Irene* is a failure. The reason lies in the greater physical concreteness of the drama. Contrary to Johnson's expressed belief, a "dramatick exhibition" is not "a book, recited with concomitants that increase or diminish the effect." Or, if we accept this definition, it must be with the recognition that the "concomitants" can add or take away so much that they become more important than the book. In a prose fiction like *Rasselas,* we can placidly accept that the Afro-Oriental setting is a dado. But *Irene* is meant to be acted by living men and women. As a story of love, jealousy, and sacrifice, it has to be warm and breathing. The Eastern setting has either to be made actual and convincing, or laid aside. In effect, Johnson does neither. His effort to splice together the day-dreaming side of his mind with the realistically-perceiving side leaves him with the two halves in his hands. And the spectacle brings suddenly to mind his own dismissive comment on Milton's highly elaborated but deeply passionate *Lycidas.* "Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief." Johnson seems there to be saying that "fiction", including both purely imaginative representation and the deployment of copious illustration from myth and legend, is incompatible with the expression of deep personal emotion: an opinion disproved over and over again in the literature of the world. To Johnson, "fiction" seems to indicate the kind of trifling that is the product of "leisure", rather than the imaginative lava that forces itself up through the rocks of experience. His "leisure" is not at all the same thing as Wordsworth's "tranquillity." And while the judgment is totally untrue of *Lycidas,* it is, regrettably, true of *Irene,* which remains a poem for voices. A radio production of it would be interesting.

IN *Irene,* the balance between Johnson's need to speak directly to his audience and his need for a controlling *persona* is lost. It is more successfully maintained in the Latin poetry. One of the most useful features of Dr Fleeman's edition is that it gives us literal prose translations, from the pen of Professor J. P. Sullivan, of all Johnson's Latin poems. These are, we see at once, far more intimate and confessional than his English poems. In fact, the poem he wrote on completion of the *Dictionary* is, outside his *Prayers and Meditations,* the most

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direct expression we have of his personal unhappiness, his anxiety and sense of frustration.

Irene and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* appeared in the same year, the one on the boards, the other in print. Johnson must have been consoled for the failure of the one by the solid success of the other. Many people found, or affected to find, *Vanity* a densely obscure poem; but its solidity strongly reinforced Johnson's reputation. In the next ten years, this reputation was raised higher and higher. But the works that raised it were in prose, and they were scholarly and meditative. The *Rambler* essays; the *Dictionary; Rasselas;* a host of minor works all keeping to the same high standard; it was a wonderful decade. During it, Johnson blossomed as a prose-writer the equal of Gibbon or Burke. His reputation as a poet stood still. The verse he wrote during this and the next decade was largely occasional and fleeting; much of it, being concerned with parody, belongs essentially with his criticism. During this whole stretch, there is nothing in verse that equals in sonority, in passion, in grave and stately impressiveness, the great prose utterances: the *Rambler* on capital punishment, the Preface to the *Dictionary*, the review of Soame Jenyns, the letter to the King on behalf of Dr Dodd. In such writing, Johnson moves with the strength of a giant, at his own pace and in his own rhythm. To such harmonies, there is nothing that the prescribed forms of 18th-century verse can add. To such weight, there is no extra force that the compression of the couplet or the finality of rhyme can bring. Johnson has outgrown his poetic overcoat.

And there we might have had to leave it—if Robert Levet had not died before his friend and employer. Levet, the gruff old quack doctor who acted as M.O. to Johnson's strange and peevish household; Levet, who surely knew more of the secrets of Johnson's melancholia and fear of madness than anyone else, but who carried the knowledge to his grave. A year or two previously, writing his *Life of Gray*, Johnson had given some indication (we can see now, looking backward) that he himself had not quite reaped his full harvest as a writer. Gray was obviously a type who annoyed Johnson; fastidious, retired, living in comfort, keeping his distance from the sweat and filth of ordinary existence; his poems seemed to Johnson academic in the bad sense—literary and far-fetched. But Gray had written the *Elegy*—the great 18th-century poem on the death of ordinary people. The sudden explosion of praise with which Johnson greets the *Elegy*, when he arrives

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On the Death of Dr Robert Levet

Condemn'd to hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,
See LEVET to the grave descend,
Officious,[1] innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
Nor, letter'd arrogance, deny
Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

When fainting nature call'd for aid,
And hov'ring death prepar'd the blow,
His vig'rous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show.

In misery's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely want retir'd to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of ev'ry day
The toil of ev'ry day supplied.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure th' Eternal Master found
The single talent well employed.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;
His frame was firm, his powers were bright,
Tho' now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no throbbing fiery pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.

Samuel Johnson

[1] Full of good offices

at it, may reflect an uneasy sense that he has been too hard on Gray, a relief at finding something he can unequivocally praise. But I feel, too, that there is a certain pain at the root of its vehemence. Johnson is determinedly praising a man he doesn't like, because that man has done a job that he, Johnson, really ought to have done. It was Johnson, who had known toil and hunger, Johnson, who had beaten the pavement all night without the price of a bed, Johnson, who came from the people and identified with them, who ought to have written the great celebration of the dead villagers, *"their useful toil, Their humble joys and destiny obscure."* And this ironic, fastidious don had done it!

Johnson's praise of Gray's *Elegy* is a generous handing-over of laurels that ought to have been his. But the story was not over. The *Life of Gray* was written some time about 1780. Levet died in January 1782, Johnson himself in December 1784. The elegy on Levet is the only considerable work of these two last miserable years; in some ways it is the crowning work of Johnson's life. It universalises the particular experience without one invented detail or one conventional sentiment. It is a nugget of pure truth.

Boswell records that Johnson recited the verses to him, on 21 March 1783, "with an emotion which gave them full effect." Anyone who cares for Johnson's poetry would give a great deal, I think, to go back in time and eavesdrop on that recital. In the elegy on Levet, we hear, perhaps for the only time in his verse, the voice of Johnson speaking with entire directness: no *persona*, no ventriloquial substitutions, no element of parody or implied critique of a mode of expression. This is not invariably a recipe for the best poetry. Some poets, when they speak directly from their experience, reveal nothing but the thinness of that experience and the self-regarding manner in which they have reacted to it; they are more interesting when they can erect a literary structure.

But it is the particular nature of Johnson's case that the strength of his work comes, very directly, from the strength of his character. Levet, coarse and morose and unqualified as he was, stood Johnson in good stead not only as a "social comfort" but as—what his nature demanded—a moral example. He was the steward with the single talent who had not allowed it to lie idle. Commonplace as his gifts were, he had rendered a good account of them. So that the sudden and merciful ending of his long life, coming at a time when Johnson was preparing for his own death, released a deep spring of feeling in Johnson. Into these few short stanzas he put a mountain of his truth; where there was leisure for grief, there was little fiction.

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Versions of Exile

New Novels—By PAUL THEROUX

JUST OUTSIDE Surabaya, in East Java, there is a huge treeless cemetery with a battered signboard at the entrance reading *Graveyard for Foreigners*—in the National Language. The grave-markers are so ornate—the pillars and roofs affording shade—that Javanese youths sit under them and play cards or listen to music on their portable radios. Four poker players in lotus postures are cooled by the monument *In Memoriam Augusta Baronesse van Lawick-Hercules*; a flock of goats munch grass beside *Rudy van Houten—Rust zacht kleine lieveling en tot wederziens*; and way over there ("*Yehudi! Yehudi!*" cry the little boys waving grass clippers) are the plots and stones of Jews, in several languages: "*Myn geliefde broer Hayeem—*" "*Our beloved Hilda—*". Chinese, according to their religion, are buried in different sections: *Hier rust Anton Tjiung* in the Christian part, *Tshaw Khoer Tan* rests in the Buddhist. Many of the Chinese were born in the Archipelago—the Dutch, too (*Geboren Solo 1877*); the Jews, almost to a man, were born in Baghdad.

These people died when distance was still a factor of exile. Today this is not always so. Exile cannot be simply the matter of miles from one's mother or motherland—the prices of charter flights make the whole idea ridiculous. The American beachcomber in North Sumatra is only a couple of days by air from his home in the Bronx: he will go back. The Indian in East Africa is an unwilling exile, a stateless expatriate, rejected by the Africans and British, and unwelcome in India. But he has relatives. The West Indians in George Lamming's new novel, *Water With Berries*,[1] have an island home, San Cristobal, which they speak of returning to, but it is a place which has "no antiquity; no magic of remoteness; no trail which led to some prize of ruins that might be waiting for discovery"—the island is an embarrassment, a good place to stay away from. Mr Lamming's characters—a painter and his friends—are engaged in Britain in a kind of negligent rebellion. They are plagued by workless days and several unnamed terrors; they are not uncomfortable in England, but they are acutely dependent upon it. The plot is for much of the book unclear, and as soon as it becomes clear it is incredible; the poetic prose of the narrative has a perfect dazzle, but this is about as helpful as an unshaded bulb, distracting rather than giving light. It is when expatriation is defined and dramatised that *Water With Berries* takes on a life of its own, for Mr Lamming is meticulous in diagnosing the condition of estrangement.

THIS IS ALSO the strong point in *Efraim's Book* by Alfred Andersch.[2] Here, exile is an attitude of determined loneliness, but Mr Andersch shows that a man's remoteness is made irrelevant by his study of familiarity: the exile seeks a large city, and by learning how to live in the place he makes it his own—a familiarity with superficial details helps one to stay. Efraim (sometimes "George") says, "Nowhere do I feel so at home as on the escalators of the London Underground. . . ." Efraim is a Berliner, but "I have the feel of London. In Berlin I sometimes had to reconstruct . . . because the city has changed, because large parts have been obliterated." Like Lamming's novel, Andersch's has a creaky and hectic plot ("I ought to be getting on with my account of Lampe's party. . . . "); both men are writing about wanderers—the randomly suspenseful plots don't matter, the expatriation does. Remove the plot from *Efraim's Book* (a search for a lost girl) and the stateless man's testimonial becomes plain: " . . . I stop outside the showcase of an estate agent and read the notices. It's a habit with me; in cities to which I am a total stranger I can stand for minutes on end outside such showcases, imagining that I am going to settle here and slip into a strange existence, a new life." The man who feels no national fidelity is at an advantage: a little resourcefulness allows him to belong anywhere.

[1] *Water With Berries*. By GEORGE LAMMING. Longman, £2.

[2] *Efraim's Book*. By ALFRED ANDERSCH. Translated by RALPH MANHEIM. Cape, £2.95

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Martin Edelweiss, the hero of Vladimir Nabokov's novel, *Glory*[3] (first published in 1932 in Russian and just republished in the "definitive English version"), is a complete exile—self-reliant, intrepid, imaginative—for whom the travel which exile requires is "an enchantment." He shares Efraim's satisfaction in being a stranger:

> A feeling of opulent solitude, which he often had experienced amid crowds—the delight he took in saying to himself: Not one of these people, going about their business, knows who I am, where I am from, what I am thinking about right now—this feeling was indispensable to complete happiness . . . .

Martin travels from Russia with his Anglophile mother to Biarritz and later to Cambridge, Berlin and beyond, disappearing at the end of the novel into a mysterious and magical exile's paradise, "Zoorland." Nabokov suggests that it is Martin's soaring imagination and restless love-sickness that bear him onward, and though he is not "talented"—not a writer or artist—Martin's continual movement and close observation of gesture and landscape is certainly a form of creation. And his masterpiece ("I, too, plan to explore a distant land") is the journey to a fairy-land, a dream-landscape, a death of his own making: this is fulfilment, an alternative to sitting at a desk and writing fiction. It is Nabokov's happiest and most youthful novel, a beautiful pause between *The Defense* (published two years earlier) and *Laughter in the Dark* (published a year later); for the man who has a genius for folding his tent and stealing away, exile is glorious.

IT IS PAINFUL for Ezekiel Mphahlele's characters. " . . . We're all displaced persons once we leave South Africa. Like after a war," says a character in *The Wanderers*.[4] And not only in leaving South Africa. Mr Mphahlele insists in the first part of the novel that to be black in South Africa is to be a displaced person. The hero is the wrong colour in the Republic, the wrong class in West Africa, and the wrong nationality in East Africa—the choice is hopeless: he must decide whether he wants to be a master, a servant or a slave. In a Kenya-like country his job is "Africanised" and, disgruntled rather than bitter, he realises he must move again. *The Wanderers* is flawed by melodrama and a certain narrative fatigue, but the poignancy in the central character's dilemma is real enough: where to live? With apprehension and hope in equal measure, Timi Tabane pushes off to America. He has put the political struggle behind him—it is for his son to cling to the idea of a national identity and become embattled.

E. L. Doctorow might find Timi Tabane's choice of America as a refuge rather curious. His recent *The Book of Daniel*[5] is an excoriation of the place: America is an affliction, driving one character mad and another to acts of cruelty. We are made to understand that when the sometime narrator, Daniel, forces his wife to disrobe and kneel facing away from him on a car seat so that he can mutilate her backside with a hot cigarette-lighter, America must be blamed. The mutilation is not described (a lyrical retelling of the grisliest part of *Le Chien Andalou* follows), but seventy pages later we are lectured at length on cruelty. Daniel's parents, worthy folk whom he barely understands, have been convicted of passing secrets to the Russians and electrocuted: "I suppose you think I can't do the electrocution," the narrator accuses the reader. "I know there is a you. There has always been a you. *You*: I will show you that I can do the electrocution." He does it, with the same calculated sneer, and that horror and pain leave one completely cold, just another indulgent outrage in a novel that fairly bursts with outrage and self-conscious wound-licking. America is unbearable, but is escape possible for Daniel—can he exile himself? There are hints that Canada is a refuge. Canada! In the equatorial graveyards for foreigners, there are few American names. The problem posed in *The Book of Daniel* is unsolvable: Daniel has given himself no choice but to remain in a country for which he has developed a special loathing.

THE IMMIGRANT is the exile willing to give continued residence a try, and his adjustment to residence often takes the form of recreating in the new country the most congenial features of the society he left behind. In *Water With Berries* it is the drinking in pubs and the nocturnal meetings of the Secret Gathering—West Indians rehearsing fantasies of violence in Hampstead. In "The Cafeteria", a story in Isaac Bashevis Singer's superb new collection, *A Friend of Kafka*,[6] the narrator describes the way he has accommodated himself to America—by walking the streets, by staying in the same New York neighbourhood ("Even the pigeons know me . . . "). Every day he meets his fellow immigrants at the cafeteria:

> . . . old bachelors like myself, would-be writers, retired teachers, some with dubious doctorate

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[3] *Glory*. By VLADIMIR NABOKOV. Translated by DMITRI NABOKOV and the author. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £1.75

[4] *The Wanderers*. By EZEKIEL MPHAHLELE. Macmillan, £2.95

[5] *The Book of Daniel*. By E. L. DOCTOROW. Macmillan, £2.50

[6] *A Friend of Kafka*. By ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER. Cape, £2.25.

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titles, a rabbi without a congregation, a painter of Jewish themes, a few translators—all immigrants from Poland or Russia. I seldom know their names. One of them disappears and I think he is already in the next world; suddenly he reappears and he tells me that he has tried to settle in Tel Aviv or Los Angeles.

"The Colony", a story about a Yiddish settlement in South America, describes the failure of a scheme "to turn Russian Jews into Argentine peasants." The narrator, invited from New York, gives a lecture on Jewish history and Yiddish literature to a roomful of thoroughly disinterested settlers who, during the lecture, eat peanuts, chatter and scold their children, while the hall lights are strafed by insects and a stray dog barks. Abraded by exile, they are too far away from Europe and too changed to care. At the centre of the colony is a cemetery where the original colonists, remembered only for their quarrels and terrors, lie buried: death in the distant land is their only proof of exile and, as in Surabaya, the cemetery stones remain long after their houses and farms have decayed.

NOBODY KNOWS the slightest thing about him. He doesn't belong anywhere. Rootless—that's what he is, a slightly superior sort of gypsy." Frau Jepsen is speaking of Doktor Busbeck in Siegfried Lenz's sixth novel, *The German Lesson.*[7] The statement is a precise identification of an exile, and Siggi Jepsen in his penal institution (an enlightened home for delinquent boys) is certainly remote in time and place from what he calls the Atlantis of his past ("to be brought to the surface, chunk after chunk"); but this is a novel of such subtlety and size that its inclusion with other current novels cannot but make the review lop-sided.

Siggi, under the tutelage of Governor Himpel and his gang of guards, teachers and resident psychologists, has been set an essay to write, titled "The Joys of Duty". When Siggi turns in a blank copy-book, the psychologists murmur "Wartenburg perceptual defect" and "cognitive block", but Himpel has an answer: Siggi is to be taken from his cell and to remain "in decent isolation" until the essay is written. Then the floodgates of memory open and the simple essay becomes a mammoth recollection of early childhood in war-time Rugbüll, the northernmost town in Germany, where Siggi's father Jens was the only policeman, and Siggi's best friend, a painter of vision and imagination, was the object of the policeman's dutiful attentions. Hitler's name does not appear anywhere in the nearly 500 pages; Jews are not alluded to. The war is an occasional enemy plane, some ineffectual

[7] *The German Lesson.* By SIEGFRIED LENZ. Translated by ERNST KAISER and ETHNE WILKINS. Macdonald £3.50.

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trench-digging, brief talk of the "Leader" and a cumbersome bombing that results in the slaughter of a friendly cow. Yet to read the novel is to understand in the most human way possible the German terror, and the conflict between the authoritarian world and the artistic one. Herr Lenz does more than, as Siggi puts it, "shake the past out of its sleep"; he affirms what is best in man, the stubborn will to create, the triumph of imagination.

It is Jens's task to inform the painter Max Ludwig Nansen of the Berlin decree that he may paint no more. Jens, full of homilies about duty ("A useful chap . . . toes the line"), delivers the letter to an appalled Nansen: "When your lot talks about duty, others can look out for trouble." Siggi is in the middle; his father enlists him to spy on Nansen (" . . . keep your eyes skinned") and Nansen entrusts him with some paintings. Both men are intractable, and eventually Jens is confiscating the painter's work, "Sails Dissolving into Light", "Landscape with Unknown People." The titles are evocative, but Herr Lenz goes further and describes the paintings in great detail; it is one of the novel's pleasures. Nansen says, "There's only one action in every painting, and that's the light"; the illumination is lost on Jens who, repeating that he is only doing his duty, soon finds some joy in obstructing the painter, even to the extent of confiscating blank sheets of paper which Nansen calls "invisible paintings." "These sheets are going to be examined." Later Nansen (raging, "All the things we thought impossible are being done. . . . It's their utter ruthlessness, after all, that's their strength") is dragged off for interrogation.

Siggi's essay grows and grows. It is discussed by the prison psychologists as the novel breaks into interview ("Psychoid mnemism") before resuming. Siggi becomes the subject of a case study, *Art and Criminality, the Case of Siggi J.*, and long extracts from this are included. It is unusual for a novel written in the first person to be anything but an exercise of the ego—*The Book of Daniel* is a good example of this kind of squinting and embarrassed self-regard. Lenz manages to make all his characters large without making them brutes—and not only the policeman and the painter, but also Per Arne Schessel, the expert on Schleswig-Holstein, Siggi's sister Hilke, the prison guards, the weather-beaten natives of Rugbüll; and the landscape which Lenz visualises so keenly:

> I am not speaking of *some* landscape, just any landscape, but of my own landscape, and I am not trying to rediscover some unspecified misfortune, but my own particular misfortune—in short, I am not just telling *somebody's* story, some story that doesn't commit me personally.

Lenz lingers at the edge of a scene—a sky, a field,

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a river—and patiently sketches. Siggi's crime is stealing paintings. Under the circumstances it is the obvious thing to do, for his father's sense of duty is arrogance, and even Siggi realises, with Nansen, that there is no such thing as a neutral colour. After the war Nansen is vindicated—his reputation grows—but Jens recognises Hilke naked in the painting "The Dancer on the Waves" and we are reminded of authority's continuing obsessions. The novel holds one in its grip, and persuades, and even after one is released it persistently cautions and cheers.

A Bridge in Minneapolis

By Douglas Dunn

THAT EXCELLENT American generation of which Lowell is considered the luminary has had four premature casualties: Weldon Kees, Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, and now John Berryman. When Schwartz's and Kees' books will be available here is anybody's guess: perhaps Mr Lowell could use his influence. Berryman's work is available, and now, three years later than its American publication, comes Jarrell's *The Complete Poems.*[1]

I shall be writing on Jarrell for a later issue; but he gets pride of place in this round-up, right at the top of the pile, where he ought to be. His collected work is impressive and worth missing three or four new smaller volumes to get. The poems he left uncollected, or omitted from his *Selected Poems*, or wrote just before his death, are surprisingly close to his best quality. One of the newer poems is "The Player Piano", a dramatic monologue painfully in touch with what seems the crucial hurt of his life.

Berryman's death was forecast often enough for his readers to be grieved when it was finally announced but not surprised. He ends his affectionate poem for Jarrell, sharing the inadequacy and sense of loss:

> *. . . we sought, among the beloved faces*
> *eminence and were dissatisfied with that*
> *and needed more.*

We knew the suicidal tendencies in the verse, his considerations of death out of panic. *"I am headed west also, also, somehow."* Go west, young man. No advice for a young, or an old poet. But one must never argue with a man's reasons for demise, especially in a world like ours, sinking into its own crap and sung to by slithy toves.

In his penultimate book[2] Berryman's dissatisfactions with the "love" and "fame" of the ironic title are disturbingly, sometimes entertainingly, charted. Surviving his anger and hopelessness, Berryman's wit invigorates cadence and sentiment to the last syllable. His curious combination of depression and vigour helps explain why many readers find him wilfully eccentric, or miss the ironies in his apparent trivialisation of his own melancholy.

Out of his career of ambitions and affections Berryman emerges despairing, reflecting on suicide, consciously deciding to carry on out of respect or love for fellow patients in the institution, enduring madness and breakdown. Darkness of this sort comprises the third part of his last book in four movements. That, however, is only one phrase in the story.

You should know the full weight that the pattern of the book carries. It is a book with an ironic structure; each movement cancels out its predecessor. Berryman progresses from the worldly to the spiritual, from the cheeky postgrad, a "lonely and ambitious young alien" at Cambridge, full of young man's juice, who can shout like the proverbial insufferable American:

> *Yeats, Yeats! I'm coming! It's me, Faber & Faber,*
> *you'll have to publish me some day with éclat.*
> *I haven't quite got the hang of the stuff yet*
> *but I swamp with possibility . . .*

to a man in Minneapolis who sees God. The final movement is a statement of faith, "Eleven Addresses to the Lord": "Master of beauty, craftsman of the snowflake. . . ."

One surrenders to the verve and honesty, the innocence of Berryman's recollected experiences of girls and literature, girls and Cambridge bookshops, girls and poets, girls and Berryman, girls and friends, girls, girls, girls. Berryman has drenched the first two sections in rhythmical affection, randy anecdote and a barely submerged melancholy. But it's not a formal autobiography; he is not trying to tell it all:

> *I am not writing an autobiography-in-verse, my*
> *friends.*
> *Impressions, structures, tales, from Columbia in*
> *the Thirties*

[1] *The Complete Poems.* By RANDALL JARRELL. Faber & Faber, £4.
[2] *Love & Fame.* By JOHN BERRYMAN. Faber & Faber, £1.40.

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& the Michaelmas term at Cambridge in '36,
followed by some later. It's not my life.
That's occluded & lost.

So *Love & Fame* is not an exercise in *Prelude*-ising. "The growth of a poet's mind," is, however, the subject; but it is a career into disenchantment and out of disaster, towards personal religion. Wordsworth gets a mention more than once, especially on the subject of restraint:

"If I had said out passions as they were,"
plainsaying Wordsworth confided down deep age,
"the poems would never have been published."
Ha! a confrère.

But this is really the text:

By our own spirits we are deified:
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Love & Fame is a quick book to read, exposing the reader to a range of attitudes and details—joyful, exuberant, wry, hopeless, angry, desperate—that expose the contours of Berryman's life over the years. That is how a long poem should work, building up on us as each step qualifies what came before, involving the reader in story, pattern, shifts of ideas and changes of heart. The final impression is of sheer strength and simplicity, and the last movement of all is courageous. It is easy to resent a poet's falling into the arms of the Church in the last pages of the last book, the finale of the worldly-aesthete. Yet even God and his priests couldn't put the lead shoes on Berryman's irrepressible cadences. To jump off a bridge in Minneapolis! Why is it only the good guys end up bumped off?

STEVIE SMITH died in March 1971, fulfilling the death-wishes of the title poem of her last book, *Scorpion*,[3] even more movingly in "Black March", and directly in the poem with which the book ends, "Come, Death." Only a style so original, and of such settled character and strength can survive so blunt and traditional a lyric subject as the openly wished-for death. Most poets write at least one poem from this feeling. Some do little else, brilliantly, and get away with it. The secret is style. Patric Dickinson, who contributes an introduction, says: "At a cursory reading she might be taken to be a kind of 'Sunday' poet. It would be difficult to find a poet more sophisticated. The technique she chose to employ is, likewise, shrewd, naive, and devilishly clever, with a hint of God correcting the proofs." This is apt, but over-generous; she is a brilliant poet at her best, writing so personally and unlike anyone else to the extent that some readers feel she just isn't trying. The longer story poems can be boring, while the agnostically-Anglican dottiness sometimes cannot get past the silliness for its own sake which is her worst fault. But I'll defend what I like to the last gasp.

But must we allow good to be hitched to a lie,
A beautiful cruel lie, a beautiful fairy story,
A beautiful idea, made up in a loving moment?

The answer is always *Yes*. If we like beautiful ideas, loving moments in which things like stories are made up, Stevie Smith will get the acclaim she deserves.

WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS seemed to me a bit more than just the "best things on offer in that line." Their mystery, the intensity of their involvement in their own emotions and the nature of their perceptions of realities and life is peculiarly different from the masculine standard, as if eyes had gender. To gather them up into a reviewer's harem is not meant to be patronising or grudge them individuality; they are individual, strongly so, with that exploration of identity, and the doubt and intellectual stringency of the blue-stocking-who-is-not-a-bluestocking, to put it into Comanche. No one can deny the force of their contribution to the poetry of this century: think of the lasting influence of Emily Dickinson (Berryman based the form of *Love & Fame* on a study of her lyrics), or the quality of Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath, Anna Akhmatova and Stevie Smith.

VIGOROUS IMAGINATION galvanises an untranquil state of feelings in Fleur Adcock's second collection.[4] She invents "otherness" characters with whom she talks on the subjects of fear ("Bogyman") and, in "Clarendon Whatmough", the oppressions of righteousness. Both poems have sufficient directness to underplay the strain on the jaunty verse, especially in "Clarendon Whatmough" which is written in the rhymed light verse of terror relying, as poetry of the grotesque often does, on the ironic antithesis of an important subject expressed in unlikely form:

Clarendon Whatmough sits in his chair
telling me I am hollow.
The walls of his study are dark and bare;
he has his back to the window.
Are you priest or psychiatrist, Clarendon Whatmough?
I do not have to believe you.

To be absolutely successful, the poem would have had to carry a denser burden of shock and imagery. As it is, it relies too much on narrative

[3] *Scorpion and Other Poems*. By STEVIE SMITH. Longman, £1.50.
[4] *High Tide in the Garden*. By FLEUR ADCOCK. Oxford University Press, £1.25.

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and scene-setting; but it does at least demonstrate that Adcock is prepared to take risks with imagination. More evidence of this is immediate from "Gas", a long and mysterious poem. Gas falls on a village; it deals death and duplication. People die or become two, then four, then eight. . . . They long for "what death there is."

Whatever it is that's being said, "Gas" is a powerful poem that would have been less impressive had its mission been clearer. Her best poem is a great deal less ambitious than "Gas." Although calm and gently written, "Country Station" is a poem in which everything is right, the ambition is (as it should be) to match the mood and story of the recollection rather than be impressive.

"WORTHILY REMINISCENT of Edward Thomas," says the blurb of Molly Holden's *Air and Chill Earth*.[5] My affection for Thomas is so entrenched that the blurb's suggestion made me uneasy. Molly Holden, however, does possess a substantial gift of that "vigorous and delicate intuition" which de la Mare ascribed to Edward Thomas. There is one additional dimension he did not have: he did not see himself as a middle-aged natural philosopher of suburbia.

Mrs Holden's poems are emotionally wholesome, unquestioning, looking out to the countryside from suburban gardens or through car windows. This is arguably the only reasonable context for a contemporary nature poet when what precious little is left of the countryside is cultivated or rambled over and solitude consequently brief. Mrs Holden regrets the incursions of bulldozer and bungalow up the orient wheatfields, as does Patricia Beer in a different way. But complaint is not noticeable in this collection; she perceives and celebrates, thankful for what she has. One of her best poems—"Suburbia, like Hanging"—contains her best range of effects, as well as doctrine:

Suburbia, like hanging, concentrates
the mind most wonderfully, points here a view,
a slice of sky, a pattern of quiet roofs,
the observation of a sunset hue

that's moved across a wall as soon as seen,
the marks of rain's long action upon bricks.
Well, praise it for this excellent effect
it has on men—though these are city tricks.

Delight's always available to those
who need no burning-glass to urge the fire
of empathy; yet I still count my luck
for this suburban view of trees and spire

[5] *Air and Chill Earth*. By MOLLY HOLDEN. Chatto & Windus, £1.25.

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that faces afternoon and evening light,
is limited by lamp-posts, fences, lengthy wires,
but might be heart-of-Wiltshire scenery,
the smoke from chimneys autumn's last field-fires.

PATRICIA BEER[6] lives in the suburbs (Hampstead) and she remembers a rural childhood. The situation is standard and middle-class, and to write about it poetically demands honesty and a talent for irony. Mrs Beer has both qualities. For example, she is not unaware of the irony in "Self-help" that a girl brought up on "*notions of self-help/Not that it was so-called and none of us/Had read or heard of Samuel Smiles,*" should be sitting in Hampstead Village on a Georgian sofa "*reading Samuel Smiles/*In paperback with *afterword and foreword.*" The poem is particularly about women "Practising lawful self-advancement"; but the idea is not attractive, to her and most other people. The poem ends by spreading out into the wide-open scale of death that only Philip Larkin can pull off convincingly:

and through
The white comfortable mist a wind blows holes
Lays bare the quagmire reaching for us all
Whispers how soon we could be shouting "Help."

In "The Coming of the Cat" she is seen to accept the limitations of the suburb at the same time as she notices the falseness of its gentility and repression:

We have been taught to take
Our dreaming like medicine.

Night ticks on. Here in Hampstead
No owls hoot and the church clock
In the "village" is throttled
Till seven tomorrow morning.

She regrets and approves. In other poems, suburban morality is endorsed ("Safe Lives", "The Faithful Wife"). There is nothing wrong with this; but it's very plain, and what is safe in life is unfortunately often dull in poetry.

A similar tension exists in Molly Holden's poetry, too. If the successes of language are any test of moral truth in poetry (I believe in Pound's "I believe in technique as a test of a man's sincerity"), then I think it true to consider both Beer and Holden as, in their contexts, right. Both have evolved an idiom that is quiet but personally authoritative. Mrs Holden's is more immediate and lively; in Mrs Beer's case, rhythms are prosaic but apt: it is as if she had caught the mood of the poem too late for its strengths to break through; sensuous eddies are frozen in reflection, no matter how deeply felt.

GEORGE MACBETH'S *Collected Poems*[7] display a remarkable shift from the elegiac and earnest to the flippantly technical; from the elevatedly baroque to neologistic form in fifty-seven low-down varieties. The first part of the book—poems of "public crisis interleaved with family deaths" —is the most impressive. "An Elegy" is successful enough for me to believe that the novelties and grotesqueries of later sections represent a mistaken use of his abilities.

MacBeth is famous (or notorious) for his over-employment of "blood", "stones", "death", in his attempt to evoke a vision of the raw meatiness of humanity in its mid-twentieth century. The post-Auschwitz guilt, indignation and fear is best presented in "Report to the Director", a deadpan monologue by an administrator of genocide. The most controversial treatment is "The Auschwitz Rag", a poem everywhere dosed with reviewers' plangency for its "bad taste." It is in fact an example of irony as imitative formal principle: the viciousness of historical fact is conveyed by the assumed nastiness of the poet. It is cruel and calculated. There are good literary precedents: Swift uses the same technique in his famous final solution to the Irish problem.

The poem swings with the relish of a sick joke, *Catch-22* irony: like swinging a dead cat by the tail. It is both an insult and a revelation.

There is a tendency in MacBeth's work towards a frail and trivial level of risk-taking. Paradoxically, this is a result of his dedicatedly formal approach, a sensitivity to newness, rather than stupidity or temperament. One can also blame it on the desire to go down with a bang at poetry readings. *The Orlando Poems*[8] illustrate this recent, unwanted phase. Jokes are thin or invisible; as if by a man who *wants* to have a sense of humour because it's the now thing. Disposable epic or parody of *Crow*? asks the blurb. Both, and especially the former.

GARY SNYDER'S style is that of the gentle barbarian, a traveller with few books whose senses are unclouded with urban dirt and whose perceptions are uncluttered with university rubbish and thus lambent with the beauty of observed things and experience for their own sakes. That would be absolutely perfect, were it true: Rimbaud in Abyssinia, free of illusions and hurt, recovered, happy, free, rejoicing in nature. No matter what Snyder's aesthetic suggests, his practice falls short of its ultimates. He is simply not free of pretension, the California-ego-aye-ai. *Regarding Wave*[9] is less impressive than

[6] *The Estuary*. By PATRICIA BEER. Macmillan, £1.50.
[7] *Collected Poems 1958–1970*. By GEORGE MACBETH. Macmillan, £3.50, paper £1.50.
[8] *The Orlando Poems*. By GEORGE MACBETH. Macmillan, £2.60, paper £1.25.
[9] *Regarding Wave*. By GARY SNYDER. Fulcrum Press, £2.

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Fulcrum's 1966 volume, *A Range of Poems*. There has been a weakening of vision; his poems are less solid. He is also writing poems about poetry, always a bad sign, and there is a greater emphasis on the pacific free-loving life-style and mantra-power politics. Some admirers of his firmly tailored poems and meditations through and in nature may be disappointed with that.

Earlier poems of X. J. Kennedy's will already be familiar from Donald Hall's Penguin selection *Contemporary American Poetry*, which has just been reprinted. *Breaking & Entering*[10] is his first proper publication in Britain and was overdue. It gathers from two books and a limited edition, with seven new poems added. He has a finely-tuned ear, writes carefully, usually in polished stanzas in which a dexterous technique complements a cultured wit and balanced sense of narrative and episode. This might make him seem dry and academic; but the fineness of craft is never offensively obtrusive as the only reason for having written. His instincts are robust, his forms, though polished, are plain, and he prefers the mystery of feelings to showing off in metre. His wit gets chronologically darker and sharper.

NOW IN HIS middle fifties, Gavin Ewart[11] first printed poems as a precocious youth in such revered places as *New Verse*. He now writes with a sense of his generation having grown flabby in flesh but hard in mind, shoring up regrets against ruin, proving his almost-instincts almost true, a poet in whom sentiment must never stand unqualified. This is the impression that rises like a spectre of middle-age refusing to grow old gracefully in the section of the book "The So-Called Sonnets." There is an admirable edge to his writing, cynical, disillusioned, aware, too personal to be satirical but moving in that direction. The way in which he uses the first person and his own name, cultural allusions (*"Outside my window/The birds are singing a page out of Livy"*), and an abrasive encounter with the new generation and righteousness, all suggest he has been admiring Peter Porter:

> *God is on my side. He will protect me*
> *against the Holebrooks and Whitearses who*
> *go about like raging roaring lions*
> *seeking whom they may devour.*

"The So-Called Sonnets" are as an enterprise reminiscent of Porter's "Sanitized Sonnets." Far from using the similarity as a detraction, I'd offer it as proof of a genial and witty exchange.

[10] *Breaking & Entering*. By X. J. KENNEDY. Oxford University Press, £1.25.
[11] *The Gavin Ewart Show*. By GAVIN EWART. Trigram Press, £1.75, paper £1.

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There are many enjoyable, marvellously readable poems in *The Gavin Ewart Show*—jugglers, strippers, trapeze artists, crooners and patter men—but the laugh is on us; the jokes all have black borders.

Writing with a recognisably experimental or revolutionary bias is all that some people will read. I have met students who claim that to read or listen to anyone other than contributors to the *Children of Albion* anthology would corrupt their revolutionary potential. Roy Fisher[12] was included in that volume. He is certainly conscious of *wanting* to make it new, but then so is everybody. Fisher's intelligence is strict, his practice serious and skilful, holding closely to a deliberate and original aesthetic—a faith in words as a means to truth, a scrupulous charting of the unrealness of reality and the nature of his own consciousness. Fisher's poems are not easy; nor is his experimental prose, a volume of which is published simultaneously with the poems.[13]

ONE OF THE slimmest slim volumes for some time is *Sounds Before Sleep*[14] by the Scottish poet James Aitchison. It has a mere twenty-three pages of poems. His area of experience is almost entirely domestic; the mode is decidedly minor, but he writes like a man confident of his authorities, unwilling to take on the ineffable. His successes are unremarkable, but pleasant:

I turn and turn for sleep
in the thin gasp of far gales.

There is yet another damned translation from the Anglo-Saxon in John Cotton's *Old Movies*.[15] This time it's the *Seafarer*. I would have thought Pound's version enough. It seems to indicate a contradictory interest in a poet otherwise given to nostalgia ("*How I loved those old movies . . .*") and imitations of George MacBeth's line of monologues ("Camp Doctor"), or suburban nature-poems, while he wastes good material on chatty writing: "*There's something about main line stations. . . .*"

[12] *Matrix*. By ROY FISHER. Fulcrum Press, £1.60
[13] *The Cut Pages*. By ROY FISHER. Fulcrum Press, £1.60.
[14] *Sounds Before Sleep*. By JAMES AITCHISON. Chatto, £1.05.
[15] *Old Movies*. By JOHN COTTON. Chatto, £1.05.

Letters from the Underworld

By Graham Parry

IN THE SUMMER of 1849 an outbreak of cholera in London reached epidemic proportions, taking its victims predominantly from the squalid overcrowded working-class areas of the city. The *Morning Chronicle*, a paper of philanthropic disposition, sent its reporter Henry Mayhew down to Bermondsey to investigate the spread of the disease, on what was the first of his innumerable journeys to "the undiscovered country of the poor." The conditions in which the cholera flourished were evidently the result of violently adverse economic circumstances, and Mayhew rapidly realised that he had strayed into the terrifying network of exploitation, parasitism and relentless competition that had reduced vast numbers of the metropolitan population to pauperdom. His consciousness of the innumerable iniquities suffered by the poor, yet unimagined by the respectable world, found expression in the long series of letters in the *Morning Chronicle* from October 1849 to December 1850 that attempted a systematic survey, trade by trade, of the city's impoverished multitudes. This he later drew on and extended in book form as *London Labour and the London Poor*. Many of the letters which did not get published in this work have now been edited by E. P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo, who contribute two substantial essays on Mayhew as an introduction.[1] Particularly satisfying is Mr Thompson's detailed account of Mayhew's erratic literary and journalistic career, with its inclination to dabble in radical politics, which reached a peak of seriousness in these social investigations. The same essay also provides us with the most elaborate reconstruction so far of the complicated and elusive biography of the man who, though he related the circumstances of thousands of his obscure contemporaries, revealed virtually nothing about his own life.

Miss Yeo is more concerned with Mayhew's methodology, and is particularly anxious to make us see him as a systematic empirical sociologist, a claim that Mayhew himself would have been sympathetic to, for he liked to think that his

[1] *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the Morning Chronicle 1849-50*. Edited by E. P. THOMPSON and EILEEN YEO. Merlin Press, £3.25.

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enquiries were quickened by a scientific spirit:

> I made up my mind to deal with human nature as a natural philosopher or chemist deals with any material object; and . . . I did most heartily rejoice that it should have been left to me to apply the laws of the inductive philosophy for the first time, I believe, in the world to the abstract question of political economy.

Indeed, his work is clothed in the trappings of a superficial scientism that was fashionable in the 'forties and 'fifties; for example, in order to organise his subject, he attempted to classify the various occupations generically in an almost Linnaean system, establishing first the principal classes of labour and then the categories and subdivisions that lay within them. The heavy emphasis on statistical information also helped to reinforce the air of impartial scientific enquiry, the principal object of which was to identify the causes of poverty and low wages across the whole spectrum of the urban poor. Observation and investigation he hoped would give rise to hypotheses about the origin and progress of poverty in a capitalist society, and in turn suggest means for its alleviation.

But can one in fact say that Mayhew's work conformed to the rigorous standards that he claimed for it, and did the enormous mass of information that he gathered enable him to construct a coherent critique of the prevailing theories of political economy? Miss Yeo builds up a picture of Mayhew as a proficient social and economic theorist, compiling her argument from the many brief comments and hypotheses scattered through his work, and drawing particularly on the polemical series of "Answers to Correspondents" that he conducted on the wrappers of the weekly numbers of *London Labour* in 1851, and on the four pamphlets *Low Wages, Their Causes, Consequences and Remedies* of the same year. However, the sporadic manner in which these pieces were issued, their incompleteness, and the absence of sustained argument indicate how difficult it is to regard Mayhew seriously as a systematic sociologist or economic critic. The very conditions under which he worked impeded the development of an extensive considered critique of the problems of Victorian society: constant interviewings, rapid reporting and frequent publication, and the rather hasty use of statistics caused by these pressures did not favour the growth of a coordinated study. Mayhew's own increasing interest in the street folk also drew him further away from the central issues of poverty in the regular trades. He certainly had more detailed information on the urban poor than any of his contemporaries, but it would be overstating the case to suggest that he managed to construct any substantial

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critical structure from his material. One has only to think what Engels did with considerably less information but with very acute selectivity in his *Condition of the Working Class in England* to see how Mayhew in comparison is simply suffocated by the abundance of his own material and the relative weakness of his conceptual faculties.

THERE CAN BE no doubt, however, that these new papers show Mayhew writing with considerable power, and behind the objective tone one constantly feels the suppressed waves of shock and anger. He is dealing here not with the eccentric occupations of the street folk, but mainly with the regular well-established trades, and is therefore forcing his readers to confront a radical poverty which could not be evaded or ignored. He vigorously dismisses some of the standard mid-Victorian assumptions about the causes of poverty and the measures for its relief. Over-population, the favourite explanation of the Malthus-inspired political economists and the censorious leader-writers of the respectable press, is shown to be an evasion of the real reasons; the apparently inflexible laws of the labour market are seen to be the contrivance of opportunist employers, while charity and emigration, the recommended panaceas, are exposed respectively as a near-futile half-measure and a callous form of deportation.

Beginning his survey with an enquiry into the condition of the most completely depressed section of the London labour market, the weavers, needlewomen and tailors, Mayhew reveals behind the starvation wages the inhuman operation of unregulated competition. The glossy West End merchants try desperately to undersell their rivals, and grind their East End workers in order to do so. A mania for cheap prices infects the country. The same story comes out time and again in the interviews: how ten or fifteen years ago wages were higher and life was tolerable, but wages have since been ground down by price wars and by the growth of the real parasites of the capitalist system, the middlemen. Hood may have briefly twisted Victorian consciences with his "Song of the Shirt", but week after week Mayhew appalled his newspaper audience with his dispassionate, factual accounts of an economic system that was driving its crowds of victims to destitution and death. The pictures of Ministers of the Crown having their Court dress assembled by starving tailors, of the British Army being clothed by a system that enriched the contractors and beggared the operatives, of distressed needlewomen turning *en masse* to prostitution because an eighty-hour sewing week would not produce enough to exist on, all bring out the social barbarism and the degradation that was the price of middle-class prosperity.

THESE INVESTIGATIONS sharpen our understanding of the mid-Victorian scene in a number of ways. We are constantly being reminded of the raw power that an individual in authority could exercise over others. The petty tyrants who figure so noticeably in Dickens' novels, usually as schoolmasters, head clerks, small-time employers who make life miserable for their underlings in a world where there is no redress, no appeal, make their appearance in many of these sad narratives of the poor. Here they are the sweat-shop operators who work their employees in conditions that amount to slavery, or the relentless landlords, or middlemen who refuse to pay for goods delivered a minute late, or small ship-owners who contrive to fine a sailor almost the whole of his wages earned on a voyage. All show inhumanity activated by the profit motive; a society of predators and prey, the world of Dombey, Dorrit, Podsnap and Bounderby, where the commercial middle classes contain the real enemies of the people.

Conversely, in a setting where a man can so easily mutilate his economic dependents, and where a worker has no rights or protection, the good-hearted man stands out as the main hope for a better way of life. Mayhew refers several times in his account of the state of the seamen to one benevolent ship-owner noted for his fair dealing, who runs a home for his employees and cares for the well-being and education of their families; such a man enables some addition to be made to the sum of human happiness, and he enjoys moreover the goodwill of his workers. The change-of-heart syndrome often found in Victorian fiction, exemplified by Gradgrind or Scrooge, and often condemned by modern readers as ineffectual sentimentalism, appears in Mayhew as one possible way of combating unregulated capitalism: in the absence of organised labour or legal restraint, the responsible employer has to make a stand and endeavour to improve the condition of his men. Certainly Mayhew saw little enough evidence of this happening, and recognised that only the unionisation of labour could combat the system, but he tends to feel that the introduction of humane relationships into the economic circuit is a first and necessary corrective.

So much probing into the depths of society revealed many oddities. Extreme poverty turns people into grotesques, and there are numerous figures in these papers who behave like fantastic characters from a novel of social condemnation, such as the destitute needlewoman who sleeps in the finery of a half-made-up lady's gown because she has been forced to pawn her own bedclothes,

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or the tailor who cannot get married because his coat is always in pawn. A reading of Mayhew reminds us that many of the incidents in Dickens' novels that seem like grotesque fantasy may simply be the result of acute social observation.

ONE FEATURE of the current economic situation that Mayhew is particularly concerned over is the way in which low wages and intolerable hours forced women into prostitution. The many interviews with women who turned reluctantly yet deliberately to the streets show Mayhew at his most compassionate, and they confront his audience with the fallen fruit of the tree of Victorian prosperity in a way that irrefutably demonstrates the hypocrisy of "respectable" opinion. A chain of economic circumstances links cheap clothes for the middle class with the prostitution of needlewomen, and the clergyman buying his cut-price cassock is unreflectingly participating in the process that sends some young woman on to the streets. One realises why there were 80,000 prostitutes in mid-Victorian London, and why their plight is one of the frequent minor subjects in Victorian fiction and painting. They were a major social problem, but the morality of the time preferred to ignore its existence whenever possible.

With so much intimate knowledge of the details of people's lives, Mayhew has an almost Darwinian sense of the struggle for existence on the tangled banks of Victorian society. As his *London Labour and the London Poor* showed, people can scrape a living from virtually anything: the rehabilitation of used tea-leaves, the recycling of the excrement of dogs, the sale of rats, and dozens of other bizarre occupations vividly indicate how precarious yet how tenacious was the existence of the poor on the inhospitable soil of Victorian England. Mayhew is wonderfully aware of the complex interconnections of all things in the world of the poor, and the cost in human misery when some factor in the system is adjusted.

The sum of misery in these pages is incalculable, and its exposure in the *Morning Chronicle* caused a national outcry. But besides horror Mayhew had stirred up resentment, mainly among the respectable businessmen of London who were embarrassed by his disclosures. It would appear that one of these gentlemen, a tyrant of the tailoring trade who was also Sheriff of London, pressured the *Chronicle* into terminating the series. Mayhew promptly set himself up privately, and proceeded to issue *London Labour and the London Poor* in weekly parts, turning his attention however to the less contentious matter of the street traders.

The present selection of letters is fascinating enough to make one wish for the complete series, especially as there are a few items that are inexplicably omitted here, notably the three highly critical letters on Ragged Schools, which caused much consternation in Victorian philanthropic circles by their denunciation of "the villeinage of benevolence." Nonetheless, with these new papers we now have for the first time the opportunity of understanding the genesis of Mayhew's work and how it fits into the immediate social crisis of the time.

Docks

The smell of streets that bend, change
With light, warp. Grey-iron boats beside the range

Of cranes, warehouses, silence—a glassed-scene
The eye rolls over. A sky thin, watery, mean—

I taste all this, its air, by just being there.
Oil that rounds the edge off each sharp, bare

Ripple of river water; the swing of a great crane
Wildly stabbing air like a bent, cadaverous finger-bone;

And cables taut as black arteries across
The vision. Suddenly steely rain falls, puts a wet emboss

On everything; a mist curls afterwards in smoky flame
From the river; a ship lurches and I catch its foreign name.

William Oxley

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

"The Week" That Was

By D. C. Watt

ONE OF THE MOST widely believed collection of myths in the history of the 1930s in Britain has to do with a cyclostyled weekly newsletter published by Mr Claud Cockburn under the title of *The Week*. Mr Cockburn himself re-emerged from Irish obscurity in the early 1950s, allegedly at the instance of Mr Malcolm Muggeridge, to write for *Punch*. He was then tempted to write his memoirs, now collected together by that residual legatee of Victor Gollancz' Left Book Club, Penguin Books, under the general title *I, Claud*. It was in the first instalment of these memoirs (originally published in 1956, under the titles *Discord of Trumpets* in the United States and *In Time of Trouble* in Britain) that he launched upon contemporary historiography his version of the foundation and history of *The Week*, together with his own estimation of its influence and success. It was accepted without much question by its readers and has passed largely unquestioned into the canon of received knowledge. Indeed Mr Cockburn's success was such that his wife Patricia Cockburn was persuaded to publish her version of events, *The Years of 'The Week'*, in 1968. No doubt we may look forward to a third family volume, possibly entitled *Son of The Week*?

That Mr Cockburn's version of events has been received without question hitherto is largely due to a combination of three circumstances. In the first place, English historians, unlike their American counterparts, fight shy of studies of public opinion and the influences upon it. The recent publication by the Clarendon Press of Mr Frank Gannon's thesis on The British Press and Germany 1936-39 may go some way to counter this. In the second, complete files of *The Week* are difficult to come by. Those who bought the 40,000 odd copies Cockburn mailed out every week evidently did not preserve them. Even specialist libraries such as those of Chatham House, the British Library of Political and Economic Science or the Institute of Contemporary History do not possess sets of it. Outside the Copyright Libraries, only a handful of University libraries, and they all outside London, possess runs of *The Week*, and these are in no case complete. The only historian in fact to deal with the subject in any detail is the German Dietrich Aigner in his extraordinary study of British opinion of Nazi Germany and the various mutually antagonistic forces working upon it, *Das Ringen um Deutschland*, published in 1969.

The ready acceptance of the Cockburns' estimates of the effectiveness of their newssheet seems the odder when it is recognised that Mr Cockburn himself has made no bones about his position, his antecedents or his opinions. As he tells us in his memoirs, he worked as an assistant to the principal correspondents of *The Times*, first in Berlin and then in the United States, before and during the years of the world slump. He drew from these years a contempt for "the system" by which society was organised in Europe and the United States in those days and for those who organised it. Being where he was and in the trade he practised, he added to this an even greater contempt for those who managed and organised the main newspapers of the Western world. From his years in the United States he imbibed a good deal of the old muckraking ethos. He also seems to have been struck unconsciously by the model of the small local one-man crusading American newspaper. *The Week* owes a great deal to both these traditions in American journalism.

What Cockburn added to this was the standard interpretation put on the events of the time by the displaced intellectuals of Europe and America of the day, that a single socio-civil conflict of dimensions at least as large as those of Europe and America was in progress, between the forces of stupid-reactionary repressive, élitist, business, clerical and aristocratic authoritarianism and the new progressive, efficient, anti-capitalist intellectual and working class democracy. But he added a little more. Not only did he accept, as did most of those who shared his viewpoint, that the Soviet Union came into

D. C. WATT *is Reader in International History in the University of London and was Editor (1962-71) of Chatham House's "Survey of International Affairs". He is the author of "Britain Looks to Germany" (Oswald Wolff 1965), "Personalities and Policies" (Longman 1965), and a co-author of "A History of the World in the Twentieth Century" (Hodder & Stoughton 1967). He is at present finishing a study of the immediate origins of the Second World War, "How War Came".*

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the second rather than the first of these two antagonistic groupings. Being Irish he joined them. He became a Communist, though not an openly avowed one. He joined, as a Communist, in that whole ferment of the West European Left which produced the Popular Front. And like those much more widely successful and active German promoters and organisers of fronts galore, Willi Muenzenberg and Otto Katz, he prospered.

The Week itself is a remarkable product of the journalistic side of that Agitpropagated milieu. Cockburn himself lived from and off the Anglo-American-French press corps and their contacts, friends and informants. Theirs was a world still remarkably unexplored by historians, though it did an immense amount to fix in the public mind a set of attitudes to the events of the 1930s, a hagiography and a demonology, which has affected historical interpretation ever since.

It was, of course, consistently anti-Establishmentarian. It may have dined with the Right; it certainly voted, where it voted, with the Left. It was not particularly distinguished for its ability to see the differences between one country and the other. With some exceptions, such as the late G. E. R. Gedye, it was more distinguished for the ease with which it moved across Europe's frontiers than for its comprehension of any particular area. Its correspondents interviewed the great; they did not hob-nob with them. For each situation they tended to have a ready-made interpretation. Since this was very often at odds with the editorial policies of their employers, they were the more confirmed in that conspiratorial approach to society which was already inherent in their approach to events. And since whatever else the Establishment did or did not know, its members had at least a more accurate understanding of the processes and influences which produced official policy than had the international press corps, the gulf between Press and Establishment tended always to widen more than narrow.

To this process, by his own account, Mr Cockburn's *Week* was a massive contributor. But he added to it one special contribution of his own. In the United States, after Roosevelt's election in 1933, much of the press and its barons were themselves alienated from the incoming administration. Roosevelt's supporters were the more inclined to distrust the press and to read avidly the kind of allegedly "inside" information *The Week* produced. Its general hostility to the Establishments of Europe fitted their own distrust of the old Continent, a distrust inherent in the American radical tradition since the days of William Jennings Bryan and the Populists. *The Week* was read avidly in Democratic circles, and not only there. Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, was a subscriber, as his published *Diary* abundantly demonstrates. So, too, was that arch Republican opponent of entanglement in Europe, Senator William Borah. So too, would it appear, was the State Department, or at least its idealist-progressive wing, whose own intelligence service was at this time of the most primitive.

It is a fascinating and rewarding exercise today to check through the pages of *The Week* for a particular period and compare them with the evidence now available on the actions, plans and motives of those on whom *The Week* reported. For the purposes of this article I have chosen the first eight months of 1939 from January 1 to September 3. The comparison recalls that *The Week* was as much the victim of its own *idées fixes*, preconceptions and prejudices as any of those it so bitingly criticised. Indeed, except on the progress of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations for a common front against Hitler, where it was clearly fed information from the Soviet Embassy, its record of accuracy is extremely low in any of

London

SEVEN DAYS, *first mooted just over a year ago as "Britain's Socialist photo-news weekly", made its debut on the news-stands on October 27. It takes its cue from Claud Cockburn's celebrated (some would say notorious)* The Week, *which ran between 1933-1946.*

"As he saw it the political situation in the thirties needed an 'insiders sheet', highly informed, with the news the other papers wouldn't touch", says his son Alexander, who is one of the editorial collective running Seven Days. *"What he thinks is needed now is a paper with the same left-wing clout, but for a mass audience." Appropriately, therefore, Cockburn is a trustee of the new paper and will also contribute to it.*

Seven Days *also aims at being the* Picture Post *of the extreme left. "Photography in the English press is fairly restrained so far as businessmen and politicians are concerned", maintains Alexander Cockburn. "But in French and Italian magazines there is more hatred in the lens—rack-renting profiteers look like rack-renting profiteers. We've already had photographs from Northern Ireland which none of the nationals would touch."*

On the basis that "journalists spend their whole time criticizing their editors", the direction week by week will be by an editorial board. The paper will start, optimistically, with 50,000 copies which W. H. Smith have agreed to distribute. A final thrust from Cockburn: "Since the main enemy of the paper is capitalism, we've got a limitless supply of material." THE TIMES

THE NEWSPAPER SECTOR of the alternative press is now in a state of almost total collapse. This week's edition of *Seven Days* announces that it will not be published again until May, and then only if £20,000 can be raised. THE TIMES

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the areas on which the accuracy of its statements and judgments can now be checked.

Among its most far-fetched areas of misunderstanding are any issues connected with German-Polish and Anglo-Polish relations; the whole area of inter-Axis relations; Anglo-American relations; Anglo-Italian relations; the degree of British Governmental opposition to Hitler; the activities of the Vatican; and the position of the Far East in general. One should also note its continuing obsession with Spain and the Spanish Civil War, months after the Soviet authorities had wound up the International Brigades, recalled their advisers and suspended aid to the dwindling forces of the Republican government.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONVEY the real flavour of *The Week* without copious quotation—which would no doubt be a breach of the copyright laws. But here are three extracts from issue No. 309 of 5 April 1939. Two of them are, as will be shown later, quite untrue. The third is only partially true and is largely incorrect in its description of Lord Halifax and Sir Samuel Hoare's views. What is so typical of much of *The Week* in this passage is the frame in which it is cast, and the curious and long-winded phraseology in which so small a nugget of information is dressed up—rather as if a doll's house was to be decorated with stone gargoyles of a Notre Dame scale.

The first passage covers the preliminaries to the Italian attack on Albania:

> The Albanian coup has been organised between Berlin and Rome with the fullest approval of Berlin. The theory in Berlin is that this may serve as the true reply to the "check at Warsaw." Stories in the British press to the effect that the Albanian affair is a sign of the breaking of the Axis are deliberately untrue or else misinformed.
>
> The purpose—discussed between Goering and the Italians in Rome—is to repeat in Jugoslavia the pincers movement successfully applied to Czechoslovakia and not quite successfully applied to Poland—yet.
>
> There has been between Goering and the Italians, a full discussion of plans for a simultaneous attack upon Albania by the Italians and a sudden outbreak of irredentism in Croatia with the inevitable appeal to Berlin.
>
> The appeal would be answered in a form reminiscent of the German treatment of Ruthenia: that is to say, Croatia would be taken under German "protection", and the Hungarians would get the former Serbian districts.

The next covers the alleged spread of German influence in the Italian army:

> *The Goose-step:* The "Germanisation" of the Italian Army has proceeded very fast. According to British agents in Italy, approximately fifteen per cent of the entire Italian Army, and approximately forty per cent of the effective Italian mechanised forces, are now armed, and tutored by the Germans.
>
> Northern Italy, where anti-German feeling is at its height, is virtually an occupied area. This is the truth behind the stories circulated in the British press to the effect that "Italy is breaking out of the Axis". The Italian people—particularly in the North—are trying to break out of the Axis: the jokes about how it was "really better when we were ruled by Mussolini" are an expression of the state of affairs; but—and it is a big but—there is no genuine evidence whatever to suggest that without some new, serious setback for Mussolini, the anti-German and hence anti-Mussolini forces in Italy will play any effective part in events until at least after the outbreak of war.

The last deals with the events which led up to the issue of the British guarantee for Poland, an event so difficult to fit into Mr Cockburn's version of British policy that he never refers to it directly at all in a "report" which stretches over the remaining four pages of the issue. . . .

> The position is this: Despite all denials the British Government was split to pieces on the issue of immediate co-operation with the Soviet Union. The "co-operators" were in a small minority. It is not true to say as has constantly been suggested by his friends, that "Lord Halifax was a hundred per cent in favour of such co-operation". Lord Halifax, like Sir Samuel Hoare, was waiting to see which way the cat would jump. Lord Halifax has a genius for suggesting that he is always "on the side of the angels". Like the late Mr Eden he has allowed himself to be used again and again as the "goo-goo" front of British politics.
>
> That is to say whenever any particularly gross "*schweinerei*" is to be committed Foreign Office officials rush out of the bushes and explain to newspaper men that although there may conceivably be some such thing in the air one must remember either that Mr Eden is such a gentleman or that Lord Halifax is so religious that it is inconceivable that anything of the kind could seriously be brought off.
>
> The next step in this interesting game which has been observed by scores of newspapermen from Seattle to Kansas City, to New York, to Paris, to Bucharest, to Tokyo, is that the *schweinerei* in question is committed.
>
> At this point the Foreign Office men once again emerge to explain that it is true that this has happened but that "Anthony was horrified" or "Halifax was deeply disturbed."
>
> Trivial as it seems to the British, who are used to this sort of thing, it is one of the things which to people with longish memories—like the Poles and the Russians—seem highly disquieting, and the things that disquiet the Poles and the Russians in this situation are things of major importance.

TAKE THE ISSUE of Poland first. To the radical intellectual Left in Europe, the régime of the Colonels in Poland was obviously anathema. Colonel Beck, the Foreign Minister, who had signed the German-Polish Non-Aggression pact in 1934 was particularly suspect. Thus Cockburn reports of Hitler's meeting with Beck in Berlin early in January 1939 that Hitler was offering to "deal Colonel Beck in on the Colonial Game",

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that Beck was drawing Poland away from the Soviets back to the "path that leads to German vassaldom" and that he was trying to postpone a showdown with Germany without alienating Russia by the only "deal" open to him, an agreement to support German Colonial claims. In April he reported that Beck had told William Bullitt, the U.S. Ambassador in France, that an arrangement with Hitler about Danzig was part of the price Poland had to pay for the British guarantee of Poland; in July he reported that direct German-Polish negotiations over Danzig had opened at the beginning of the month. His constant theme was the willingness of the Polish government to compromise over the Danzig question.

Any examination of the records, German and Polish, on the Beck-Hitler conversations shows that the first of these allegations is totally untrue. We possess both American and Polish records of Bullitt's famous conversation with Beck in April which totally controverts Cockburn's report of the conversation. There were no German-Polish talks in July for the simple reason that Hitler had decided on the destruction of Poland and was not prepared to settle for anything else. Whatever else may be said of Beck's policy in 1939 it is clear that he ruled out *ab initio* any compromise over Hitler's original demands over Danzig and the Corridor, and he never wavered on this.

IN THE AREA OF inter-Axis relations Cockburn was totally unable to perceive the reality beneath the propaganda. In January he was already postulating a degree of *Gestapo* penetration of Italian life and of German military control over the Italian army which was untrue of the *Gestapo* and both untrue of and undesired by the German army whose opinion of the Italians' potential as allies were that they were a liability rather than an asset. At the end of January he was reporting on the existence of a German "*Expedition Korps Sud*" of six divisions centred on Klagenfurt which was going to intervene alongside Italian troops on the Italo-French border in the event of a Franco-Italian conflict. In his next issue (No. 300 of 1 February), it seemed that the plan had widened to a joint Spanish-Italian attack debouching from the Pyrenees towards Lyons. These reports were completely baseless and the "*Expedition Korps Sud*", which so worried the State Department in mid-February that Roosevelt announced publicly that he might have to cut short his absence from Washington, never existed.

THE ITALIAN ATTACK on Albania, so he reported in the extract cited above, was concerted between the Germans and Italians in talks at San Remo in which Goering took part, at which a whole "time table" of concerted action was settled. The truth is that the Italian attack on Albania was kept secret from the Germans by Mussolini in his anger at being kept in the dark over the German occupation of Prague, and came as a total and somewhat unwelcome surprise to them. A final indication of how totally out of touch Cockburn and his sources were is provided by his report of the vital meeting between Ciano and Hitler at Salzburg in August 1939 at which Ciano suddenly realised that Italy had been completely deceived and that Hitler was prepared to risk a major European war in 1939. It was this meeting which made Ciano throw his full weight into the preservation of Italian neutrality, as his *Diary* so convincingly relates. Cockburn, still certain that a new Munich was in preparation, reported that a German-Italian agreement had been reached to force by the end of August the holding of two international conferences, one to reach agreement on Danzig, the other on Italy's claims against France, to secure a "peaceful adjustment" on Danzig before the annual Nazi party rally in Nuremburg in early September. One is left with the impression of Cockburn echoing Ribbentrop. Ribbentrop spent his time convincing Hitler that Britain would not fight. Cockburn continually reported to his readership that Hitler would not fight.

COCKBURN WAS EQUALLY AT SEA over Anglo-American relations. He completely missed the closeness of Anglo-American relations in January 1939. He explained the change in Chamberlain's reactions to the German annexations of Bohemia and Moravia entirely in terms of American representation made unofficially, "but with great forcefulness", that unless Britain realised the gravity of the position, Roosevelt would be unable to maintain his support for a policy of "active benevolence" towards Britain. He reported that Roosevelt's failure to mention Danzig in his message to Hitler of 15 April was due to French and British representations when the text of the message was shown them in advance of his dispatch to Berlin. He talked of German efforts to involve the United States in entanglement in Europe with a need to obtaining American blessing for a new Munich type agreement over Danzig.

One hesitates to be dogmatic where "unofficial" representations are concerned, especially as some of the unofficial channels Roosevelt used are only now beginning to come to light. But there is no trace whatever of such representations in any of the copious documentation now available on the British side; and it is clear that the main influence

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on Chamberlain between 15 March and his Birmingham speech was that of Lord Halifax, emerging for once from the web of hesitant over-subtleties in which he habitually involved himself. As to the other two items they are simply untrue. The text of the Roosevelt message was not sent to any foreign government before delivery; there was no time available. And there were no German communications with Washington over a conference on Danzig, for the very good reason that Hitler did not want such a conference. He had, in any case, written the United States off as an effective force in European politics. Only someone as obsessed by the idea that a new round of surrender was in the offing—and as insensitive and uninformed on what was really happening behind the scenes in Britain as was Cockburn—could have believed or circulated such reports.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS lay Cockburn's failure to assess Chamberlain's personality and his conviction, born of the ideology he had embraced, that ideological affinity with Nazism and a common hostility to Communism were the keys to understanding that personality.

Crediting Chamberlain with the devious subtlety of a *normalien* whose education had also included a spell at the hands of the Jesuits, he failed to understand the old man's obsession with the personal responsibility he would carry if he could not say at the end he had done "everything possible" to avoid a Second World War. He failed too to realise how the residual morality of his Nonconformist forbears would and did turn Chamberlain against Hitler after Munich and lead him to turn from attempting to conciliate Hitler to the even more hazardous path of trying to manoeuvre him into a corner.

The evidence now available suggests that Chamberlain's disillusionment with Hitler began within a week of the Munich agreement and was fed by his knowledge from clandestine sources of the violent and abusive language Hitler was using against him in private; that the misguided euphoria he showed in the week before the German occupation of Prague was a product of his belief that British rearmament and the toughness of Roosevelt's language were restraining Hitler from further adventure; that the occupation of Prague left him convinced that Hitler's word was so unreliable a commodity that he would have to be fenced in, if any agreement he signed could be relied on; and that the episode of the Hudson-Wohltat talks was a piece of individual folly committed by a junior minister "on the make." One cannot easily defend Chamberlain's perception of the problems facing Britain in 1939, still less the lack of coolness and skill with which he and Halifax attempted to meet them. But his motives were substantially different from those Cockburn imputed to him. And his dislike and distrust of Soviet communism did nothing to bring him closer to Hitler.

COCKBURN'S VERSION of the tentative soundings made from the Vatican in May and June 1939 are equally wide of the mark—and much of his argument belongs to the type "it must be true—the *Quai d'Orsay* has denied it." And his reports from the Far East waver between the comic and the characteristic. To the former belong his repeated reports of a mysterious army of ten million Chinese training in the far north-west of China, reports which only provoke one to speculate on the frame of mind of a man who can slip such naiveties in with his complicated arguments about the necessities of German military logistics which (so he alleged) were making a German attack on Rumania inevitable. No doubt these Chinese all had snow on their boots.

To the latter belong his reports that British failure to react to the Japanese blockade of the British settlement in Tientsin and the humiliations inflicted on British citizens by Japanese soldiers resulted from British interest in a Japanese offer to reopen the Yangtse Basin to the British and American trade in return for recognition of their puppet régime in North China and an end to support of Chiang Kai-shek. How he thought any British government was in a position to use force against Japan in June and July 1939 is unclear; indeed in mid-August he had an intelligent account of the debates in Whitehall on whether to send part of the Fleet from the Mediterranean to the Far East, an account which was an accurate summary of both the pros and cons of such a move and was in error only in reporting the argument as taking place in August. It had in fact been concluded in March in the Admiralty's favour; the Admiralty had warned their colleagues in the U.S. Navy early in June 1939 that no forces could be sent to the Far East. His reports on Sir Robert Craigie, whose skill as a negotiator alone saved Britain from a most humiliating withdrawal, simply reflect Craigie's earlier involvement in the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 and thus in "appeasement."

TO THIS ONE MUST ADD a few real curiosities. His report at the beginning of July that two German generals had visited Chamberlain at the end of June to warn him that a coup against Danzig was imminent and only a strong line could avert war was so outlandish that one can

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only see in it an attempt to sow trouble between Hitler and the Army. His report on 2 August that two German diplomatists, Eisenlohr and Voretzsch, had recently visited London to act as Hitler's private spies on British appeasement and to offer Unilever a deal by which their assets in Germany should be unfrozen in return for their support of appeasement showed such a singular misunderstanding of Hitler's relations with German professional diplomatists as to be only explicable as a temporary aberration. Hitler, in fact, had so limited a respect for Eisenlohr that he had considered having him assassinated the previous year, when he was German minister in Prague, to provide a possible pretext for a German attack on Czechoslovakia. Cockburn's attacks on Ernest Bevin, whose speech at the Labour Party conference Cockburn chose to see as a support for appeasement, must be seen as a piece of Old Left Wing intrigue.

What is odder is the line he took over the reports in mid-January of an imminent German attack in the West, either as an all-out air blitz on London or as an attack on the Netherlands. He said, rightly, that these reports were untrue. But he began by ascribing them entirely to Nazi agents in London to whom "routine informational" instructions had been sent early in January. He later modified this to suggest that a German diplomatic assault on the Netherlands, leading to the enforced "neutralisation" of the Netherlands after a "provocation" (possibly the assassination of a German diplomatist) and the take-over of the Dutch East Indies, was being planned.

The origin of these reports is still unclear. Some certainly came from members of the German opposition to Hitler and may have originated with that section of the *Abwehr* that we know at other times did not hesitate to use false information in the attempt to create a firm opposition to Hitler. The ubiquitous Dr Goerdeler appears to have been one of the intermediaries, though he was by no means the only one. A similar warning was given to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick in December by quite a different source. The report led the Cabinet, as Cockburn did *not* report, to authorise Staff talks with France on common military action in the event of a German attack in the West (though French procrastination delayed their taking place until the end of March). One is left to wonder whether whoever gave Cockburn the report of the "Nazi agents" was aware, from his own clandestine sources, of the true origin of these reports and wished to discount them in advance, even if the effect was to strengthen the "appeasers" in the Cabinet against the "hawks".

THE GENERAL EFFECT of these reports in America has already been mentioned. But there is one classic example of Cockburn's effectiveness.

From January onwards Roosevelt and his administration had been attempting to obtain a repeal of the 1937 Neutrality legislation. Baulked in the Senate they had turned to the House. Out-manoeuvred there, they made one last attempt to appeal to the Senate. In July, Roosevelt summoned the ranking members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hear the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, expound the case for repeal. When he had finished Senator Borah voiced his opposition. He was against repeal and, in any case, he added, almost in parenthesis, there was not going to be a war in Europe that summer. Cordell Hull interrupted him. If the Senator would come to his office, he said, he would show him a whole series of State Department reports making it clear that war was almost inevitable in Europe that summer. Borah replied that he set no store by anything that the State Department reported. He had his own sources of information which were more accurate. Borah's voice was decisive. The meeting broke up after the Vice-President had made it clear that there were simply not the votes in the Senate to carry repeal. Borah's sources of information were confined to *The Week*. So much for one man's campaign against appeasement.

Perhaps the most percipient of Cockburn's remarks, however, are about the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression pact. On this he, of course, faced the *crise de conscience* all party members of his generation faced. He had not been shaken by the Purges—these, he wrote as late as 19 July, 1939, were "the great Soviet clean-up of the 'German agents in high places' which started with the shooting of the 'traitor generals'. . . ." But the Nazi-Soviet pact was a different matter. His first reaction was to express the view that it might indicate the temporary abandonment of the German coup against Danzig planned for 25 August. It was in fact the final preparation for that coup which included the full-scale invasion of Poland. But his later thoughts (on 30 August) were more accurate. The conclusion of the pact, he wrote, placed the initiative firmly in the hands of the Soviet leadership. Since its application rested entirely on their interpretation of it, including whether or not it ruled out all possibility of a pact against aggression, the "whole course of the war or the peace must turn" around this point, that is, must depend on how the Soviets exercise the initiative this "eleventh hour coup" bestowed on them.

History knows how this initiative was exercised.

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PRESS

Auden Europeanised

Blue Pencils & Rose-Tinted Spectacles

> *"The worst thing, from my point of view, that could happen to Europe would be if it became a melting-pot in which cultural differences were erased. One cannot, alas, say that this is an impossibility."* W. H. AUDEN

I WONDER REALLY if Mr Auden has got much to worry about. A comparative study of the translations of his article in the much-heralded joint supplement "Europe in 1975" (published simultaneously in *The Times*, *Le Monde*, *La Stampa*, and *Die Welt*, 23 February 1972) shows that his fears are groundless. This inaugural common supplement was not, I am afraid, an identical supplement. Two of the papers involved made important cuts in his article, and all three contain more or less serious errors in translation. The German is the best translation, in spite of two major omissions and an apparent misunderstanding of Mr Auden's remarks about photographic advertisement. The Italian is the most literal, with some minor mis-translations and three gross errors involving inattention to the text and making nonsense of three sentences. The French, while sometimes pretty, is often very inaccurate indeed; furthermore, it shortens the original text out of recognition.

The version in *Le Monde* appears to be an arrogant piece of editing. I have no idea how the different articles were commissioned, nor whether this article was cut simply because it was far too long. Whatever the truth of this, readers of *Le Monde* did not enjoy the same article as readers of *The Times* and the other papers. My present purpose is to give a brief comparison of the different versions. I have no wish to discuss the merits or otherwise of Mr Auden's article ("Down with the 'Melting Pot'"), nor to take it more seriously than he intended it.

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1. The first cut made in the French version is the passage which contains the quotation from Smollett. According to the version in *The Times* what Auden wrote was:

> As one of the characters in Smollett's *Count Fathom* says: "When an Englishman happens to quarrel with a stranger, the first term of reproach he uses is the name of his antagonist's country, characterized by some opprobrious epithet, such as a chattering Frenchman, an Italian ape, a German hog, and a beastly Dutchman."

Nothing of this appears in *Le Monde*. The German and Italian texts include the passage, and surely "hog" and "ape" are more offensive than "chattering".

2. The second cut made in the French text occurs in the paragraph about tourism, where *Le Monde* omits:

> His only reasons for going, let us say to Spain, seem to be, so far as I can see, to sunbathe, a habit of which I disapprove, and to be able to tell his neighbours that he has been there.

Irrelevant badinage, if you like, but why on earth miss it out? Could it be that some French people might feel offended?

Die Welt, also, omits this remark about Spain, but then it has omitted the whole of the preceding attack on tourism:

> Tourism, on the other hand, however valuable as a source of revenue to the favoured country, does nothing to improve mutual understanding and good will. Even the educated tourist is all too often only interested in the sights, natural or artistic, and shows little or no interest in the inhabitants of the country he is visiting, or their history. As for the mass tourist, he is interested in nothing, not even in the food.

Are the Germans, one wonders, still second in the tourist league-tables, or have they now become the leaders?

3. The third cut in the French text is more important both from the point of view of length and of content:

> Politically, the future does not look too bright either, though a change of political régime does not, I think, alter the character of a people so much as the totalitarians would like to believe. I am sure that anything is better than a one-party system whether of right or left. (The only country where it is tolerable is Yugoslavia, but there, though there is officially only one party, in fact there are four, the Slovenes, the Croatians, the Serbs and the Macedonians.)
>
> One has, however, to admit that political life in the non-communist countries is not in a very healthy state either. When I was young I would never have dreamed that I would live to see the day when the greatest threat to the economy would come from the trade unions, which have become power structures indifferent to the common welfare.

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I am terrified lest, in despair at the inability of democratic governments to deal with industrial disputes or solve such problems as pollution, the electorate should opt for some kind of dictatorship.

My private political solution, which, of course, I know, stands no chance of being adopted is this. Politicians should be elected, like jurors, by lot. This would destroy the party machines. Because there would be no possibility of their being re-elected, the elected could vote according to their own conscience. And the computers could work out the proper representation of minority groups.

THE TEXT published in *Die Welt* does not omit as much as the French which has cut out the entirety of these three paragraphs. The German omits from "Politically the future . . . " to "not in a very healthy state either." I make no comment about this political bowdlerisation, except to say that to miss them out changes radically what Mr Auden wrote about Europe, and that it is surely not unrelated to the political attitudes of these two great newspapers.

There is one minor textual variation which is of a different sort since it concerns a word which is missed out in the English, but appears in all the others which include Prussia as one of the Protestant countries. The most obvious explanation is that this was missed out in error by *The Times* at the stage of printing.

IT IS INTERESTING to look closely at the translations themselves. In the first sentence, for example, one wonders if the French translator is justified in translating

> To me, Europe, at least its heartland, means the area dominated by the ideals of French culture,

as

> *L'Europe, je dirais que, pour moi-du moins son foyer -c'est l'aire où règnent les idéaux de la culture française.*

The Italian has translated "heartland" by "*cuore geografico*", and the Germany by "*Kernland.*" "*Foyer*" is not without merit, but is an interpretation rather than a translation. In the same way to translate "dominated by" as "*où règnent*" is kinder than to have said "*dominent.*" We may imagine the warm glow of pride the French translator felt at what he took to be a compliment. Rose-tinted spectacles can be dangerous.

Where Mr Auden talks about "officially Protestant countries", the Italian is the only one to include the adverb. Since we can say in English "Protestant countries" as easily as the French and the Germans, then surely the translator is obliged to leave it in, especially as it leads directly on to the sentence about the English.

One passage raises several points of translation and interpretation:

> With the exception of intellectuals who read European literature either in translation or the original, and have some knowledge of one or two European languages, and perhaps a few members of the aristocracy who have married into European families, the English have never thought of themselves as Europeans.

I am not happy about the translation "*la littérature du continent*". It is true that this is strictly synonymous with Mr Auden's "European literature", but there is a difference of tone. Both the French and German texts translate "families" by "noble families." Were these translators working from a different text, or do they find the idea of a *mésalliance* unthinkable?

More important is the interpretation of "have never thought of themselves as Europeans." The French has "*jusqu'à présent ne se sont jamais 'sentis' européens*", the German "*haben sich die Engländer bisher noch nicht als Europäer betrachtet*", and the Italian "*fino ad oggi gl'inglesi non si sono mai sentiti europei.*" There is, however, a difference between "I have not up to now" and "I have never." The nuance may be a slight one, but there is a suggestion of wishful thinking. A final point about this paragraph is that the Italian has "*che hanno una certa conoscenza di una delle due lingue europee*", which substitutes "one of the two" for "one or two European languages."

THERE ARE MANY OTHER mistranslations. The Italian text has two other serious errors. In the first place the English remark

> When this prejudice was born I don't know—it cannot have existed in medieval Christendom—but it was certainly already rampant by the eighteenth century,

is translated as:

> *Non so quando sia nato tale pregiudizio—può darsi che esistesse già nella Cristianità del medioevo—ma certamente esso era ancora molto diffuso nel diciottesimo secolo.*

Here the absurdity of the translation of the piece in parenthesis gives rise to the further mistranslation in the "*ancora.*" The Italian translator, like the French, cannot really believe that Mr Auden is saying what he is. In the second place, the Italian renders

> I myself have reason to be grateful to the recent influx into Austria of Yugoslav and Turkish workers,

as

> *Io stesso ho motivi di gratitudine per ciò che ho imparato dai lavoratori austriaci, jugoslavi e turchi.*

To give some examples of the mistranslations in the French:

> Historically, it [Europe] is of fairly recent date, being the joint creation of the French Revolution

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and the Congress of Vienna, at which it was settled that Europe was not to be dominated by French bayonets.

This is translated as:

Historiquement, **je ne la fais pas** *remonter bien loin:* **je pense que** *l'Europe a été créée par une conjugaison de la Révolution de 1789 et du congrès de Vienne, où il fut décidé qu'elle ne serait pas dominée par les baionnettes françaises.* [My emphasis.]

The translator shows that for him the idea of Europe as a recent invention is a matter of opinion, not of objective fact.

There is another kind of mistranslation, when the translator misses out things which are in the English. For example,

It is impossible to work in a foreign country without acquiring at least a smattering of its language and becoming personally acquainted with some of the local inhabitants. **They** [referring back to British workers] **may even have something valuable of their own to contribute.** [My emphasis.]

This is badly distorted in:

Il est impossible d'exercer un métier dans un pays étranger sans attraper des bribes de sa langue, sans lier connaissance avec quelques autochtones et **sans lui apporter aussi quelque chose.** [My emphasis.]

A final example shows a similar inability to reproduce the tone of the English.

The worst thing, from my point of view, that could happen to Europe would be if it became a melting-pot in which cultural differences were erased. One cannot, **alas,** say that this is an impossibility. [My emphasis.]

This becomes:

Le pire qui pourrait arriver à l'Europe, à mon avis, ce serait de devenir un **"melting pot",** *un creuset dans lequel s'effacent les différences culturelles. Or qui osera soutenir que c'est impossible?*

The author's own disillusioned comment has disappeared.

THE AIM, PRESUMABLY, of these ambitious common European supplements is to promote understanding and goodwill. Unfortunately, when people of different nations and languages try to talk to each other, these qualities often appear to be in inverse proportion. But these are early days, and no doubt with experience and the passing of time, the editors of the different European papers will help to arrange a marriage between them.

I appreciate the problems of a professional journalist-translator, working to a deadline, though the English invasion of Europe (or the continent, if you prefer) was planned long enough ago for a common supplement to have been prepared more carefully. More important is the question of the responsibility of editors. Certainly editors may cut. People with blue-pencils must be seen to wield them. If, however, they do so to excess, then one can be pardoned for being sceptical about the value of the common Europeanism.

Poets, we know from the great European tradition, are liars, and translators, of course, are traducers. Will our press-ridden age throw up some commonplace about editors?

Peter Sharratt

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LETTERS

Ardrey's "Dimensions"

IF ROBERT ARDREY is not suffering from Two Culture apartheid ["Four-Dimensional Man", ENCOUNTER, February] he nevertheless does not seem to know what the word "demonstrate" means when used in scientific discussion. Konrad Lorenz has never "demonstrated that aggressiveness is innate in all living creatures." Lorenz selected certain lower animal species and described the situations in which they react by fighting. The fact that he includes a chapter in which he condemns the atom bomb and moralises on men's use of force to destroy and exploit each other certainly does not provide any scientific causal relationship between animal and human behaviour. A student of animal behaviour is just that, and to see humans as animals is no less ridiculous than to see animals as humans, regardless of whether the former bad habit assumes the pseudo-scientific title of "ethology."

Perhaps the most important sentence in Konrad Lorenz' book *On Aggression* is the following: "The central nervous system of animals is constructed differently from ours, and the physiological processes in it are also different from what happens in our brain." Let us by all means be "evolutionists" as Ardrey urges, and let us take this basic evolutionary phenomenon as our starting point. Man has, in fact, evolved and our attempts to understand the highly complex motivations for human behaviour will hardly be helped by projecting the few inadequate concepts we have for describing this behaviour—aggression, love, *etc.*—into animals, and then calling these artefacts basic instincts common to all animal life.

From instincts we pass to biology and, of course, Women's Liberation. This time Ardrey nominates the chimpanzee as his favourite evolutionary cradle. (Will no one champion the rabbit as the genesis for human instincts?) He evokes the pitiful, motherless, neurotic baby chimpanzee in Jane Goodall's study as an admonition to those who maintain that the (s)mothering carried out nowadays is a cultural deformation of a biological function. Ardrey fails to mention that this poor chimpanzee orphan is not just without a mother but is, in fact, rejected by all his fellow chimpanzees; rather than neurotic one might suspect that this small chimpanzee was desperate. If only orphans were neurotic or if all society needed was prolonged mother-service, such traditional societies as pre-revolutionary China, India, Saudi Arabia, *etc.*, should offer model societies of harmonious human relations.

The fact is that, regardless of Ardrey's indignation, instinctual theories *are* fascist because all oppressive role relations are explained away as "natural." Exploitation of one class by another is explained by the "territorial imperative" (the substitution of "imperative" for "instinct" reveals the political nature of the theory all the more clearly); and the exploitation of one sex by another is based on the "mammary gland" and the "maternal instinct."

The fact that human beings find their state of subjection intolerable is not mentioned by the evolutionists; are not animals satisfied after being beaten and torn by a dominant member, and if not who cares? The desire to be satisfied and content is not an instinct, or is it?

JULIENNE TRAVERS

Rome

HOWEVER YOUR CONTRIBUTOR may feel about chimpanzees, she should not misquote Jane Goodall. In her chapter, "Mother and Child," Goodall presents her observations of four orphaned chimps. Three were adopted by elder siblings. The most pathetic case was that of a doomed one-year-old, adopted immediately by her six-year-old brother who carried her constantly but was unable to feed her. She died within weeks, and still he cradled her. The others were three-year-olds, physiologically independent. "Why does a three-year-old chimpanzee become so depressed when he loses his mother?" Goodall asks (p. 247, U.S. edition of *In the Shadow of Man*). Only one, reaching six, began to show normal behaviour. There is no record in Goodall's observations of an orphan "rejected by all his fellow chimpanzees."

While Konrad Lorenz' comment on the human brain is scarcely the most important sentence on *On Aggression* except to your correspondent, it is still (as is widely known) correct. Less widely known is the work of Dr Paul D. MacLean, director of limbic research at Washington's National Institute of Mental Health.[1] What MacLean has demonstrated is that the animal brain—the limbic system—exists virtually intact beneath the human neocortex, which trebled in size in the last million years. As MacLean suggests, we have not had the evolutionary time to perfect communication between new and old brains. Hence many a human problem.

"Exploitation of one class by another" has nothing whatsoever to do with the territorial principle, which is concerned entirely with the defence of space, an area normally shared by male and female. As I point out again and again in *The Territorial Imperative*, the advantages of energy granted to a proprietor against a more powerful intruder are the chief guarantee that in a state of nature might does not make right. It was a portion of my argument, in 1966, that America could not win the Viet Nam war. So far as dominant animals beating up subordinate animals is concerned, it's all part of the Tennysonian myth of "nature red".... Among men, yes; among animals, rarely.

Concerning the indictment of instinctual theories as fascist, may I be forgiven if I regard the conclusion as just as uninformed as your correspondent's evidence?

ROBERT ARDREY

Rome

[1] *Alternatives to Violence*. Ed. Larry K.Ng. (1968) pp. 24–33.

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Darlington & the Sex Syndrome

SOME EFFICIENT intellectual operations proceed by progressive dichotomising. The elegance of such a method of search is seductive to a degree that few can wholly resist it. But for at least three decades it has been clear that to ask of any biological phenomenon: "Is it genetic or environmental?" is a nonsense question. The only answer is "Yes, it is 100 per cent both." The Nature/Nurture controversy is best resolved in the words of Sir Peter Medawar's classic aphorism: "Heredity proposes, and development disposes." We consider C. D. Darlington's confidence in his genetic thesis entirely justified (ENCOUNTER, December 1971). His exposition in *The Evolution of Man and Society* serves better than most works to show the constant interaction between the genes and the environment. But why does he suddenly falter when he meets the gender difference?

> "For example, the differences between the two sexes, man and woman, is one of the most fundamental facts of life, physiologically, and socially, intellectually and historically. It is a totally genetic one, incapable of being effectively modified by the environment. Light and darkness, teaching and feeding, do nothing to change it. It depends on a piece of chromosome having a certain genetic structure. In a thousand years we may know analytically in some cases, what that structure is. More likely not."

He thus joins Sigmund Freud who also thought that, in sex, he had encountered a riddle unsolvable in terms of his premises.

> "At this point we must give a separate account of boys and girls (of men and women) since it is now that the differences between the sexes find psychological expression for the first time. We are faced here by the great enigma of the biological fact of the duality of the sexes: for our knowledge it is something ultimate, it resists every attempt to trace it back to something else. Psychoanalysis has made no contribution towards solving this problem, which clearly falls entirely within the province of biology." (*Outline of Psychoanalysis.*)

Both these scholars' dilemmas are, we think, improperly posed because they assume a dichotomy where none exists. It depends on how you define girls and boys, men and women. The problem is that of the very large variety of differences between males and females, only some are used in defining the two sexes. Unless a more fundamental definition is derived to identify "males" and "females" all other distinctions become lost in tautology.

We have suggested recourse to the terms of biological fitness.

ONE MIGHT CONSIDER the fitness of a gene, or a group of genes, or the fitness of a sibship or kinship group. The one element, as we ascend from the gene to the ethnic group, that cannot be considered as a unit of fitness is an individual. For good reasons, unlike most other authors, we prefer to consider the fitness of a mating dyad. Individuals have only a capacity for maleness and femaleness which cannot be realised until fitness is proved through reproduction. From this we define the female as "she who bears liveborn children" and the male as "he who impregnated her." We must add the need that in some way the infant be reared to an age where it can reproduce itself. The sexual mode of reproduction does not demand sexual dimorphism nor indeed any system leading to other than random genetic recombinations. It is a feature of increasingly evolved forms that selection or choice is increasingly exercised in the manner of these combinations. In order to exercise selection or choice, individuals bearing either half of the potential zygote must be recognisable to one another. They must have individual characteristics. The principle of deliberate and precise selection of matings between chosen individuals is highly developed in humans. The human is highly mobile through a broad range of ecologies. He can recognise, remember, think and *choose*.

But for human beings, success in sexual reproduction requires suitable genetic make-up—suitable sex organs—suitable behaviour for the sex in training for the adult role—suitable secondary sex characteristics—the ability to attract a partner—the ability to perform the sex act, adequately, and sufficiently frequently to conceive—to bear a liveborn child—to sustain its life.

All these diverse requirements are to a greater or lesser extent partial determinants of the human being's ability to achieve "maleness" or "femaleness" in the sense of biological fitness. It is thus clear that a substantial range of selection pressures may operate on the probability of this achievement. The chances of making this achievement are not all handed out with the genetic stuff.

AS FOR THE GENDER PARADOX, whereby man maintains a fundamental unity while at the same time radically diverging into two sexes, we have recently suggested a set of testable propositions. It is asserted that:

(1) The differential ontogenies of the two genders depend wholly on the *Y* chromosome.
(2) The *X* chromosome is sexually neutral.
(3) The *Y* chromosome transmits no information specific to itself.
(4) The operation of the *Y* chromosome is to cause more genomic information to be transcribed from any given genome than would occur in its absence.
(5) The *Y* chromosome determines that the male shall develop at a slower pace than the female.

These notions may be made clearer by analogy. The task of development can be likened to a child mounting a spiral staircase.

As males climb the staircase they must tread on every stair, and they find on each step some instructions that they must follow. Each instruction is conditional upon what has gone before in terms of the interaction between the individual and his experience of the environment. Each instruction is conditional upon the state of the organism, and the circumstances of the ambient environment, at the moment at which it is interpreted. The process of development moves repeatedly over similar territory, each replication at a slightly higher level than before. Each instruction, basic to development, takes time to fulfil.

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Females enter a directly comparable staircase, the equivalent information is potentially available, but the females proceed at a faster pace. In achieving this pace, the female will miss out certain steps, and ignore the instructions which they contain. Girls thus arrive at maturity earlier, but have explored their own genome less completely. We believe that the difference in developmental *pace* is itself a powerful mechanism which leads to further differences between the sexes over a very large range of phenomena.

It would be inappropriate to bring forward, at this stage, all the evidence accumulated by us, and many other workers in the field, which tests these notions. We bring them forward here only because we would not wish it to be thought that gender syndromes are necessarily a battle-ground between developmental geneticists and those more concerned with psychosocial factors and their influence on human affairs.

On the contrary, there is good hope that within a few years the conflict between the two approaches to the understanding of gender will be resolved. It is to be hoped that both sides will then receive the prizes.

CHRISTOPHER OUNSTED,
DAVID C. TAYLOR

Park Hospital for Children,
Human Development Research Unit,
Oxford University

Ecology of the Mind

THE PHYSICAL violence of a handful of fanatics, invoking "science for the people," continues to plague gatherings of our learned societies. At the Christmas meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a series of outrages threw the proceedings into disorder. A small group of extremists refused to permit certain sessions to begin, disrupted others and reviled and assaulted some speakers.

Organisers of these meetings have strangely adopted a passive and indulgent attitude toward those who resort to violence to prevent scholars from speaking.

One consequence of this state of affairs is that, in effect, a political censorship is gradually being introduced at scholarly meetings out of fear of these mounting outrages. To some extent, this censorship is self-imposed. Normally, scholars do not object to facing a barrage of questions and criticisms after reading a paper. But they have no stomach for insults, libellous posters ("murderers," "criminals") waved in their faces and sustained interruptions by fanatical claques preventing them from being heard. Programme committees, aware of the readiness of these creatures from the intellectual underworld to disrupt sessions, will tend to avoid selecting topics and speakers that "provoke" disruption.

The result is easy to predict: complete freedom—which is as it should be—for anyone to present anti-democratic, anti-Establishment, anti-liberal views, but little or no freedom to criticise such views or to advance positions that antagonise liberationist, environmental or third-world partisans.

It is the responsibility of officers of learned societies to take necessary legal and administrative measures to protect the membership against disruptive activities of those who shout "freedom" while denying it to others. This responsibility is betrayed by some officers, such as Dr. Barry Commoner, a vice president of the A.A.A.S. Chiding Dr. Moynihan, who cancelled his speech at Philadelphia in protest against the disrupters, Dr. Commoner proclaimed that disruption "is a healthy sign because it shows that ideas are being expressed openly" (news story December 28th).

Dr. Commoner has bizarre ideas of what constitutes the expression of ideas. For all his concern about ecology, he seems completely indifferent to the ecology of the mind—to the poisoning of the intellectual climate and environment.

No one has prevented the disrupters from openly expressing their ideas. The issue is whether they are to be permitted to prevent others with whom they disagree from expressing their ideas, permitted to heap insult and abuse on reputable colleagues. Such actions make a mockery of scholarly meetings and convert them into ideological kangaroo courts.

SIDNEY HOOK,
MIRO M. TODOROVICH

University Centers for Rational Alternatives,
New York

"G. D. H. Cole — Secular Saint"?

I HAVE ONLY JUST seen the February issue of ENCOUNTER with Professor Max Beloff's review of my life of G. D. H. Cole. Professor Beloff does not like the book, or its subject, or other reviewers of it such as A. J. P. Taylor and Michael Foot. This hardly surprises me; I should be more surprised to hear of Professor Beloff *liking* any book or any man. So I shall not attempt to argue with his judgments; but I hope you will allow me to put right one or two matters of fact.

1. Beloff says that G. D. H. Cole "seems to have numbered no women among his friends or disciples." If the Professor could have read the number of appreciative and grateful letters I received from women, from the late head of Lady Margaret Hall onwards, when he died, when I was collecting material for the book, and after the book was published, he would not write such nonsense. You would not have space for a list of names, or a series of quotations; I must therefore ask you (and the Professor) to believe that I possess them. To have women friends is not at all the same as being "a womaniser."

2. G. D. H. did not "hate" Harold Laski, though they criticised each other. "Hate" is a word Beloff uses very readily. Whether Laski was or was not "a much abler man" is perhaps a matter of opinion.

3. Beloff states that the index of the *History of Socialist Thought* does not contain proper names, on which fact he builds an indictment. But it is *not* a fact. Beloff does not appear to have observed that every volume of the *History* contains a *separate* Index of Persons. In the one appertaining to Vol. II, the names of Proudhon and Lassalle each precede four printed lines of reference, which is surely adequate for a book which is avowedly a History of Socialist

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Vercors: "Hitler a gagné la guerre . . ."

Is it beginning all over again?

You will remember even after thirty years, you, my contemporaries, our feelings of powerlessness when Vichy allowed (or caused) our friends to be arrested: teachers and civil servants were reduced to destitution, intellectuals who argued too much were finished, thousands of innocent people were rounded up (and as for their destination, those who had allowed, or caused, the round-ups affected a modest closing of the eyes). Each month, each week, each day we heard some such news—and what did we do? We clenched our fists; yes, we clenched them in a helpless rage, and that was all; for that was all that was possible. We could do nothing to prevent these crimes, injustices, arrests, sufferings.

Oh, each one did what he could. Paul Eluard wrote some poems, and I published them. Others brought out a clandestine newspaper; others, again, joined the maquis *or blew up trains, or even shot down German officers in broad daylight. But that could not get our friends out of jail, give jobs back to impoverished teachers, return the deportees to their families, or indeed revive the victims who were shot. So, with each new imposition we clenched our fists in impotent anger, for we could do nothing to prevent it.*

And now it is beginning again. The terrible sense of powerlessness is back again because of what is happening in Prague and through all Czechoslovakia. Our friends are persecuted, good Communists though they be, are reduced to poverty, deprived of their posts, expelled from their unions, without which a writer cannot publish, a dramatist cannot be performed, an architect cannot build. Professors are driven from the universities and forced to become labourers or to waste away in menial jobs. They are stripped of their civil rights, evicted from their houses and their children denied schooling. In short, they are harried in every possible way, and in the end they are arrested. They are pursued with a venom which smells of vengeance, and reminds us of earlier stenches. Again, faced with all this, this vindictive and hateful revenge, we can only clench our powerless fists, nothing more.

All of us; myself included—as well as their colleagues and their own friends—we can do nothing beyond what I am doing here: writing a few poor words of indignation which will achieve nothing, gain nothing, and where I dare not even give names for fear of bringing down fresh disasters on them. Once again (and still uselessly) we compose appeals or petitions or protests and get them signed by a few hundred famous names, a dozen or two Nobel Prize winners—and we get no answer, not so much as a word of polite appeasement, only the black silence of contemptuous cynicism and derision.

For it was Hitler who won the war. Every day that passes makes it plain. He lost some territory but he has won his victory in the blood, in the hearts of men. It may not be the cannon that commands but since his day the police rule everywhere with a violence more or less virulent. In Prague, in Brno, in Bratislava, it is a total régime operating under only one law: take and hold power at any cost, crush disagreement and non-conformity even if it means sacrificing for generations the whole of Czechoslovak culture.

AND WE CAN DO NOTHING. *One Party might have done something perhaps, and I do not need to name it—it might have done something if it had been willing to act in time. But it did not do so.*

When, in the autumn following the intervention of the Red Army, I visited Prague, one of the leaders of this Party gave me friendly messages for his opposite numbers, who were in difficulties over there. I will not mention his name either; he will recognise himself if he reads this. I came back in that year of 1968 with still a grain of hope that this time at least we should not see the horrible witch-hunts of the old horrendous days. One year later when I returned even this hope had gone; everyone knew it, in Prague and through the entire countryside. The arrests were about to begin.

I sent an urgent S O S-message as soon as I got back, to the Party leader to whom I have referred and whose friends would be the first targets. At that moment an energetic intervention du parti frère *might possibly have held up the tragic process. But I received no answer—nothing was done—*Raison d'Etat, *of course, those abominable reasons of State.*

For Hitler has won the war, and the list of victories grows longer. He has won in Greece, that goes without saying—in Spain, in Portugal, in Brazil, in Turkey, not to speak of Viet Nam and Cambodia; but there, too, where the hope of a better world, the struggle for a better world might have made it seem, after the Twentieth Congress, that we had seen the end of the detestable iniquities that darkened socialism and cost it so many good communists—Bukharin, Rajk, Slansky, Clementis. And now it is all beginning again; and the black list, less murderous but no less detestable, grows longer: Sinyavsky, Daniel, Grigorenko, Bukhovsky and Solzhenitsyn ostracised, and the Jews driven from Poland. . . . And now, over there in Bohemia and Slovakia—now and for how long?—they are hunted again, and imprisoned, and I do not even dare to write their names.

Vercors*

in *Le Monde* (Paris)

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*VERCORS, the famous writer and artist, established in 1941 the historic "Editions de Minuit" of the French *Résistance*.*

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Thought—not Socialist Persons. Professor Beloff might care to look up the references before making further attacks.

MARGARET COLE

London

I OWE Mrs Cole an apology for an error of fact concerning the type of index in the *History of Socialist Thought*. I should have referred to the fact that there were two indexes. For the rest, what I wrote was very largely derived from her own biography, supplemented by personal knowledge. Naturally I would not expect her to agree with me on all points. On one she is, however, clearly mistaken. The fact that I disagree with A. J. P. Taylor on this matter does not, I can assure her—as Mr Taylor could—arise from any want of liking for Mr Taylor, an old and valued friend, or of lack of respect for him as an historian (adequate documentary proof of which exists).

MAX BELOFF

All Souls College, Oxford

Maxim Gorky

HAVING treated the subject at length in a book subtitled "The troubled friendship between Lenin and Gorky" (*The Bridge & the Abyss*, 1967), I should like to suggest some differences in shading from Melvin J. Lasky's evaluation of this troubled soul ["Gorky: the Shame & the Glory", ENCOUNTER, March].

Maxim Gorky returned to Russia after a solemn promise by Stalin that he could leave again whenever he wished and particularly when his health required it. He came full of illusions that he might save lives under Stalin as he had sometimes succeeded in doing under Lenin with the added illusion, possible in 1929, that Stalin's labour camps were actually for the purpose of rehabilitation of hardened criminals and genuine enemies He headed a commission to celebrate the completion of the White Sea Canal and the release of rehabilitated criminals but, within a year, he learned the truth.

From then on it was suspicion and muted struggle between him and Stalin, other vain efforts to save lives, broken health, partly due to gloom, and a refusal of Stalin to let him go abroad. Stalin sought to exact the price of a glowing tribute to him similar to the article Gorky wrote at Lenin's death. Gorky stubbornly refused and hence could not be trusted to go to a sanatorium in Germany.

This is probably the real story of his death.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

The Hoover Institution,
Stanford, California

Johnson's "Third World"

AS IT STANDS, Mr M. A. Katouzian's admirable response [ENCOUNTER, January] to Professor Johnson's "Word to the Third World" [October 1971] is indeed vulnerable to the Professor's counter-charge of determinism. But there is a simple corollary for Katouzian and riposte to Johnson. If a given situation seems hopeless to the bulk of those within it, they are of course at liberty to change it: and history, from Russia through China to Viet Nam and Cuba, shows that this is what they do. Thus Marxism at least, properly understood as a theory for action, is the reverse of determinism.

One can understand Johnson's impatience with the likes of Myrdal, whose gloomy prognoses are quite unaccompanied by any such notion of how people can and will alter their situations. But how can one follow him into old fashioned *laissez-faire* liberalism, which —as a distinguished contributor to your columns and no extremist, George Lichtheim, has recently remarked in his new book on *Imperialism*—is in the context of the scale of problems facing underdeveloped countries like India "merely a bad joke"? Here one does wish to be a little determinist, and to ask Johnson how, in the face of the recent work of Barrington Moore and André Gunder Frank (amongst others), he can deny that socio-economic formations are not a historical, permanently available choice, but rather represent successive answers to the needs of given societies in different situations. This is not to revive determinism but merely to recognise the existence of constraints and irreversible social changes.

Professor Johnson seems not only to deny the particular assertion "Liberalism is irrelevant to underdeveloped countries," but also to object to whole classes of statements of this kind on the grounds that they are deterministic. Adoption of his views on the former would render development, and on the latter social science, impossible.

AIDAN FOSTER-CARTER

Department of Sociology,
University of Hull.

PROFESSOR HARRY JOHNSON himself admits that "determinism . . . is a tricky concept." This is one good reason why one should resist the temptation of attributing it to one's critic in a debate on earthly matters—especially as it can only serve to obscure the main point of disagreement. Thus it seems that the whole argument has now shifted to a debate on whether Professor Myrdal—who really had no share in this at all—is, or is not, amongst other things, a determinist! (ENCOUNTER, March, p.95).

My argument is very simple indeed. The relative lack of success with "planning" and "control" in some developing countries, on its own, is no more evidence for the general undesirability of such methods and policies as is the failure of parliamentary democracy in many former colonies of Britain a valid argument against representative government. Moreover, such pretences to "trendiness"—as, for example, the enthusiasm for "planning" in the recent past—are sometimes merely convenient cloaks for old practices, and that is partly why they do not succeed. Some of the details are provided in Professor Johnson's own article, and these are generally what I have referred to as "objective conditions."

The simple comments preclude any judgment on my part as to which policy—free trade or intervention —is to be preferred. And if in all this the reader sees nothing but an "utter and intractable determinism" and/or "bad Marxist pseudo-sociology" then I should invite him to demolish my *argument* with his superior methodology.

M. A. KATOUZIAN

University of Kent,
Canterbury

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THE TROUBLE with protracted correspondence is that the main theme gets lost in a welter of argumentative ripostes. In referring to Myrdal I was trying to link Katouzian's views to a commonly-known stream of thought, whether he likes the relation or not, and not trying to drag Myrdal's name into an exchange in which it does not belong.

Katouzian's main point is that the relative lack of success of planning in some Less Developed Countries is no more an argument against planning than is the failure of parliamentary democracy in some former colonies an argument against representative government. The point is the same in both cases, in my view. If the people cannot work the system effectively, whether it be planning or representative government, one should not expect the system to work miracles, or indeed necessarily to work at all. Representative government in former colonies cannot be rescinded—though the case of Hong Kong suggests that it might better not have been conferred in some other cases—but since it has been conferred the question arises whether it should be trusted, or should trust itself, with the panoply of planning as conceived in older-established countries. If Katouzian believes there is no choice here, he is a determinist; my argument was addressed to those in the LDCs who still believe that there is a choice.

HARRY G. JOHNSON

London School of Economics

BINDER

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AUTHORS

THE interview with **Sir Karl Popper** in this number was conducted by **Franz Stark,** an editor of the Bavarian Radio, and has been published in German by Kösel Verlag in Munich. The text, and the translation by Maxwell Brownjohn, has been revised and added to by Professor Popper. . . .

Walter Laqueur is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London, editor of its *Journal of Contemporary History*, and teaches at the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. His most recent book is *Out of the Ruins of Europe* (Library Press, N.Y., 1971). . . .

William Trevor's new book of short stories, *The Ballroom of Romance*, will shortly be published by Bodley Head. "Going Home" was recently produced as a one-act play in London at the King's Head, Islington. . . .

Paul Theroux has just finished a critical introduction to V. S. Naipaul which will be published in September by André Deutsch. His latest book of short stories, *Sinning with Annie*, will appear in the States a month later. . . .

Joel Carmichael is a well-known American author and translator. He translated the two volumes of the Revolution Diaries of N. N. Sukhanov (O.U.P.). He is the author of many books including a biography of Karl Marx, a history of the Russian Revolution and a controversial story of Christ. Among his translations are Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and C. Brockelmann's *History of the Islamic Peoples*. . . .

Paolo Milano has just edited and introduced a new edition of Dante's Selected Works for Chatto & Windus. . . .

Graham Parry is a lecturer in English at the University of Leeds. . . .

THE drawings of Trotsky on the cover and on p.30 and of Geoffrey Crowther on p.45 are by **Jaroslav Bradác.**

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Tokyo

AMBIGUITY: The physical proximity of the Japanese breeds tension, which can be discharged by hard work, but there is literally no room for aggressively individualistic behaviour. There is a violent undercurrent that sometimes leads to street demonstrations or parliamentary brawls, and the Japanese struggle to contain it. Akira Suzuki, a leading scholar, regards the renowned ambiguity of his country's language as a manifestation of the need that Japanese feel to try to get along with one another. "If we spoke more clearly to each other," he says, "we might end up clashing in fistfights all day long."

TIME

New York

LAMENTABLE: *Many millions of instantly forgettable words have been uttered during the 25 years of the United Nations' existence. It is sad to record therefore that the highest accolade for the least memorable must go to a "Hymn to the United Nations." This is no satirical attack on the UN by another frustrated diplomat. It was commissioned by U Thant of W. H. Auden with musical accompaniment by Pablo Casals.*

If it is meant to be some sort of international anthem we can all sing and feel united and better for, then it falls flat by virtue of its words alone. Try:

"Our several voices
Interblending
Playfully contending
Not interfering
But co-inhering"

in Chinese, French, Russian, or Spanish.

And far from composing the sort of anthem which tells that all is well in the family of nations, Mr Auden has chosen to be didactic. Don't lie, he tells the world, say what you mean. Mr Auden must have had a surfeit of General Assembly debates, and missed the point that all the jaw there has sometimes prevented war. If nothing else, he has captured the feeling of some debates with:

"As the word-clock
Goes tick and tock".

Casals's music, we understand, is somewhat better.

THE GUARDIAN

London

CENSORSHIP: *The British committee of the International Press Institute has protested to the National Union of Journalists at the disruption of production of the* Scottish Daily Express *on Monday night.*

The disruption was caused because of objections to a cartoon by Michael Cummings which was due to appear in Tuesday's paper. It showed Mr. Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Communist Party, dressed as a Roman Catholic priest leaving an aircraft loaded with tanks for Northern Ireland.

In a letter to Mr Kenneth Morgan, secretary of the NUJ, Mr E. J. B. Rose, writing on behalf of Mr Charles Fenby, chairman of the British committee, says the committee is 'gravely concerned at the attempt by the NUJ chapel office (Branch) of the Scottish Daily Express *to censor a cartoon by Cummings."*

The letter says: "The committee sees this action as a serious threat to freedom of expression, all the more deplorable because the threat comes from journalists."

THE TIMES

Manchester

VERBAL MURDER: The secretary of the Welsh Language Society, Ffred Ffrancis, was carried struggling from a court yesterday, screaming at Mr Justice Talbot: "You will never kill the Welsh language, English judge."

Ffrancis, 23, Goronwy Fellows 23, and Meyrddin Williams, 22, were each jailed for a year for trespassing at the Granada TV studios in Manchester, having burglary equipment and doing £853 damage.

The society's chairman, Goronwy Davies, 22, was jailed for six months for conspiring to enter the property of the broadcasting authorities with intent to interfere with transmissions.

DAILY MAIL

London

WASHERWOMEN: *Harold Wilson's reference to the Foreign Secretary last week as "a tuppence-ha'penny washerwoman" is not as slighting as he supposed, if we take Surtees as an authority. When in "Hillingdon Hall", the hunting grocer Jorrocks is dining with the Duke of Donkeyton, there is this exchange.*

Duke: "Pray, Mr Jorrocks, who was your mother?"

Jorrocks: "Please, your Grace, my mother was a washerwoman."

Duke: "A washerwoman indeed! I like washerwomen—nice, clean, wholesome people. I wish my mother had been a washerwoman."

"I wish mine had been a duchess," replied Mr Jorrocks.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Middlesex

IN ITS CONTEXT in the novel *Howards End* the phrase "Only connect the prose and the passion" has its point. Cut down in the epigraph to "Only connect . . ." it could mean pretty well anything, or nothing at all.

It is curious [Frederick Laws writes] that this epigraph disappeared from the title page of a number of editions of the novel. I thought Morgan Forster must have dropped it out of boredom with the silly sermons it has so often provoked. Near the end of his life I presumed on old friendship to ask him if this was not so. It seems not. "I've always thought it rather profound", he said.

THE TIMES

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Scientific Knowledge and Its Social Problems

JEROME R. RAVETZ

'This book is too good for its argument to be summarized for those too lazy to read it for themselves. It is too rich and profound in detail to survive such discourtesy, and contains no obscurities to be reinterpreted. All that need be said in general is that it is thoughtful, incisive, scholarly, lucid, humane, and sane. Everyone – but everyone – within or concerned about science should read it slowly and carefully.' – **John Ziman** in NATURE £5

The Prevention of Racial Discrimination in Britain

Edited by **SIMON ABBOTT**

This study discusses discrimination in relation to British society as a whole, reviews the history of immigration to the U.K., analyses the demographical and statistical data, and examines discrimination in housing, education, and employment. It then reviews the prevention of discrimination through recent legislation and statutory bodies, the Race Relations Board, and the Community Relations Commission and its councils, and other Government and private measures. £5 *Institute of Race Relations*

Dickens and the Rhetoric of Laughter

JAMES R. KINCAID

Everyone knows that Dickens is funny. Mr Kincaid argues that the funny Dickens and the 'dark' Dickens are one and that our response to his humour is no less important in *Little Dorrit* than in *Pickwick*. Laughter is used not just to define theme but to commit us to it irrevocably. Dickens's humour is at the heart of his technique and his vision. His novels are seen here in terms of their search at all levels for the possibilities of liberation and joy. £2·75

A Theory of Justice

JOHN RAWLS

'I think that this book is the most substantial and interesting contribution to moral philosophy since the war. . . . The substance of a critical and liberal political philosophy is here argued with an assurance and breadth of mind that puts the book in the tradition of Adam Smith and Sidgwick.' – **Stuart Hampshire** in the NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS £5

Movements in European History

D. H. LAWRENCE

With an introduction by J. T. BOULTON

Out of print since 1944, Lawrence's history book for schools remains significant in the canon of his works, for here, more than anywhere else, he clarifies his view of history and of political morality and leadership. In his Epilogue – written for the second edition in 1925 but never before printed – Lawrence forcefully expressed himself on Italian Fascism, Russian Communism, and British democracy after 1918. 15 maps £3·50

Economic and Social Consequences of Nuclear Energy

Edited by **LORD SHERFIELD**

This book contains chapters by Professor Robert Spence, Air Chief Marshal Sir Denis Barnett, Sir Stanley Brown, the late Dr Hans Kronberger, the Bishop of Exeter, and Lord Ritchie-Calder. The editor, who, as Sir Roger Makins, was Chairman of the United Kingdom Energy Authority from 1960 to 1964, contributes an introduction. Paper covers £1 *Science and Engineering Policy Series*

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